

TEEVADHARA

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION



PROBLEMS OF HISTORY

A SENSE OF HISTORY

ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

George Puthumana

ALIENATION OR LIBERATION?

TOWARDS AN EVALUATION OF THE HISTORY OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

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DISCUSSION FORUM

THEOLOGY IN AN IDENTITY - CRISIS?

DISCUSSION OF A THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

Davis Kanjirathingal

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JEEVADHARA

The Problem of Man

PROBLEMS OF HISTORY

Editor :

John Arakkal

Theology Centre
Alleppey - 688001
Kerala, India

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Editorial

History has come to be a central category of modern thought. There is now a growing awareness of the changing, conditioned but dynamic nature of man and the world. Things, events and institutions are 'seen' and judged in terms of their genesis, and attention is given to the way they are conditioned by the world of their origin and development. That means that no particular mode of being, life or thought may be absolutized. Not that a reality may be reduced to its genesis or development. Changing and evolving as it is, reality is not without a certain continuity and permanence. Thus, the meaning and value of a reality may not be identified with its development or the situation of its development. Again, a reality may be as much conditioning its becoming as it is conditioned by it. That something is historically conditioned does not mean that it is in no way active. The fact is that *all* realities are more or less active and have a share in the shaping of history. To be sure, the way in which a reality is active, and the extent to which it contributes to the process of history, vary according to the measure of freedom and consciousness it has come to develop. It is this that makes history a chance as well as a task.

Now it is quite some time since the discovery of history has been making its impact on Christian theology. In fact, it is doubtful if contemporary theology lays so much emphasis on any other aspect of reality as on history. History is for most Western theologians today the central category of Biblical revelation. History, it is claimed, was discovered and founded by the Judaeo-Christian revelation. Neither the emergence of modern historical consciousness nor the creative transformation of the world through science and technology would have been possible without the Christian understanding of man and time. Thus, Christianity is said to be fundamentally different from the non-Christian religions that consider history as the perpetual recurrence of that which always has been and will be.

There is, of course, scope for disagreement about certain manifestations of historical consciousness. There have been, for instance, philosophical currents that showed little sense of the dimension of continuity and permanence without which even change would become unintelligible. Historicism has had a tendency to identify the meaning of a thing with its genesis. Likewise, generally liberating as it is, theology's emphasis on history is not wholly free from an overestimation of a certain aspect of development of reality. Whether it derives from Biblical revelation (cf. J. - B. Metz, *Christliche Anthropozentrik*, Munich 1962, pp. 108-115) or is essentially a modern development, apologetically appropriated by theology, the "Christian" view of history betrays an anthropocentric emphasis and a devaluation of the non-human world.

Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the awareness of the changing and changeable character of reality has consequences for man's life and thought. In his reflections on the meaning of history, George Puthumana has tried to spell out some of the implications which the "sense of history" has for the Church's self-understanding and life. If the world, which is a constitutive dimension of the Church's life and mission, is a changing and evolving reality, she is also bound to change and develop. Indeed, to be true to her mission, the Church needs to ask ever anew what it means to be faithful to the Gospel in a given situation and reform her structures and activities accordingly. Fidelity to Christ is not to be confused with fidelity to the *status quo* or the traditions.

If history is a fundamental dimension of man's life and thought, historiography - in fact, this is what the word 'history' means in ordinary language - is something essential for man's self-understanding. For history in the sense of historiography is nothing but our becoming aware of and understanding the genesis and development of a reality or realities. Of course, man is not wholly what he has been, he is also and above all what he can be. All the same, it is impossible to know what man is except in terms of what he has experienced, learnt and done. It is by building on, often also overcoming, what he has been that man can become what he wants to, or ought to, be. What is true of man in general is also true of communities including the Church.

To shape her life and activity in an enlightened way, the Church needs to know her origin and development and the various factors that have gone into her becoming. It is in this perspective that John Arakkal, M. V. Cyriac and Abraham Koothottil attempt a review and evaluation of the history of Christianity in India. "This is made with the conviction that Christianity should be a liberating rather than an alienating force already here and now." It is obvious that a study of this kind cannot do justice to its theme without taking into account other works on the subject. The criticism which the article makes of some of the "accepted" views on the history of the Church in India is to be seen in this light.

If history is something that has a bearing on almost all other aspects of reality, it goes without saying that the articles of this issue of *Jeevadhara* do not even raise a number of questions which should have been dealt with. In fact, without a clarification of the meaning of man, the world and God, it is impossible even to prepare the ground for a deeper understanding of the problem. We hope to deal with the matter from another perspective by devoting a forthcoming number of *Jeevadhara* to a discussion of the world in its relationship with man.

Rheinstrasse 2
66 Saarbrücken 2

John Arakkal

A Sense of History

Its Implications for Christian Life and Thought

A sense of history

In common parlance history means a record of past events and of past activities of men. In this view a sense of history would mean keeping in consciousness what took place in the past. It would, thus, be nothing but a will to memory. But history is not merely a series of isolated events. It is rather a process in which each subsequent stage is conditioned by the one that precedes it, and in turn conditions the one that follows. Thus the very framework within which historical events take place is a dynamic and moving one. Man is essentially co-involved in this process. He is conditioned by this process and in turn conditions it by his freedom. Man's awareness of being thus deeply involved in a process which moves over from the past into the future is what constitutes the core of a sense of history. In this perspective the world is not a static and closed reality but a dynamic and open one. It is, in other words, not something ready-made but something which is constantly in the making. Indeed man has never been totally unaware of the dynamism and openness of reality. Otherwise neither culture nor history would have existed. But till relatively recent times this awareness remained marginal and was implicit in his actions rather than an explicit object of reflection. Today the situation is entirely different. Far from being something accidental history has become the centre of man's reflection on life and reality as well as the most powerful factor which determines the direction of his activities in the world.¹

This intense preoccupation with history and the historical dimension of life and reality is itself the outcome of certain

1. Cf. W. Schulz, *Philosophie in einer veränderten Welt*, Pfullingen 1973, part V.

historical developments. In the first place, the colonialist and missionary expansions of the West produced an extraordinary widening of man's horizon of thought. New cultures and ways of thinking and living, as yet unknown to the Christian West, were discovered by it. Although the first reaction was one of surprise and even of rejection, (this is abundantly clear from the prevalent attitude of the Christian missionaries for whom everything which differed from their own manner of living was an error to be rejected) it was gradually realized that these cultures were, in varying degrees, capable of assuring human fulfilment and making for ordered social life and activity. The result was a certain relativization of one's own culture and life-style. What was considered, so far, as absolute and unconditional was seen to be something limited and conditioned. It was no longer possible to identify any one way of living and thinking simply with the human way of living and thinking. Humanity was understood to overflow particular traditions and cultures.

The immense knowledge which has been acquired in recent times of man's own past has widened the horizon of man's thought in another direction, namely, that of time. Thus paleontology has shown how man's present condition is the result of a long evolution in which lower forms of life developed into higher forms of life and consciousness. Historical studies have demonstrated that this is also true on the level of societies and cultures. The existing condition of a society is not the eternal manifestation of some immutable nature, but the outcome of a historical process conditioned by a variety of contingent factors. The established order is not something unconditionable and unchangeable. To absolutize the *status quo* would mean to do violence to life which by its very nature tends to move beyond its own time-bound expressions.

This discovery of history and of the historical character of human life has deeply influenced several important currents of modern thought. This can, be seen, for example, in a most striking manner in German idealism, particularly in the Philosophy of Hegel. For Hegel history is the process in and through which the Absolute Spirit comes to itself and realizes itself. Marxism, in spite of its rejection of Hegel's idealism, has retained his historicism and applied it to the development of society.

Likewise for existentialism, historicity is a constitutive dimension of the very being of man. Man is a being on the way and his life a continuing exodus. He is as much what he has been as what he can be, a datum as well as a task, one who is conditioned by history as well as one who creatively conditions it. To say this much is, in a way, to do less than justice to emphasis on history in the philosophical currents just mentioned. They are often characterized by a marked tendency to absolutize history and define it as the very essence of man and reality, thus neglecting or rejecting altogether the dimension of being and permanence to which it is dialectically related and without which the process itself would be hardly intelligible. Whatever their one-sidedness or exaggerations, one thing is clear: to them history is a constitutive dimension of man. His life unfolds itself not only in history but also as history and therefore is dynamically open to the future.

Now, this awakening of the sense of history, intensified by a series of historical experiences, has considerably altered man's attitude towards life and his relationship to the world. At the risk of a certain over-simplification we may say that the traditional man sought to accept the existing world in its essentials and to adjust himself to it, while the historically-minded modern man refuses to accept the existing situation as inevitable and seeks to change it. The risk of over-simplification consists in the fact that these two attitudes do not exist in total exclusion of one another, at least as a social phenomenon. Few, if any, among the traditional-minded would call for a total freezing of the world as it is, although something rather close to it may be implied in the attitude of some who are in a position of profiting from the existing situation. On the other hand, few historically-minded modern men go to the extent of totally historicizing reality and rejecting the whole past simply because it is past. The difference exists all the same, and is of considerable practical importance.

A simple example may serve to illustrate this. For centuries and even millennia men co-existed with the institution of slavery which, in our eyes, is not only the most abject form of exploitation of man by man but the very denial of his fundamental

dignity. Man had always considered the maltreatment of slaves as something wrong, but the institution itself remained unquestioned and even unquestionable. The attempts to improve the situation of slaves remained within the framework of the master-slave relationship. But as soon as the injustice and inhumanity of the very institution and its historically conditioned nature were recognized, the whole attitude changed. Thenceforth the aim has been no longer to create better masters and better slaves, as it was for long, but to abolish the very pattern of the master-slave relationship and to create in its place a more human social system. This passage from the reform of individual conduct to that of social structures was in no small measure a result of man's growing historical consciousness.

Evidently a sense of history is at work today not only in such isolated cases as slavery but it extends to every sphere of human life and thought and contributes to a reconstruction of society on a universal scale. This is hardly surprising because history is not merely a part of human life but embraces the whole of it. Movement is not something extrinsic to the life of man and society, but enters into its very constitution. To say this is not the same as to assent to a historicism which dissolves everything in the flux of time. To affirm that everything is history, that there is only becoming and change, is not only to neglect a dimension of reality, the dimension of being and permanence, but also to destroy history itself by cutting away the ground from under its feet. The experiment has been made in the West, at least in the domain of thought, and the result is the experience which has been given the name 'nihilism': a total loss of the sense of value and therefore also of the meaning and value of history itself. We should not identify a true sense of history with this historicism because of superficial similarities. Historicism is the creation of the academician while a sense of history is born of man's concrete experience of life in society. Historicism comes eventually to deny all permanence and value while a sense of history lives in a continued awareness of a certain permanence and value. Historicism tends to reduce the significance of the reality it investigates to its genesis. For a sense of history the significance of a thing is not reducible to its genesis, however

important this may be to comprehend its meaning. Finally, both historicism and a sense of history call upon men to reconstruct the world, the first on no ground except the will of man, pure and simple, the second on the ground of certain fundamental values which the will accepts and submits to. In short, if historicism is the malady of our time, a sense of history is its strength.

The historical character of the Church

In virtue of her relationship to God in Christ and the life which she mediates, the Church has a dimension that transcends history. On the other hand, she is composed of men and as such something essentially historical. Now the Church's transcendence should not be understood apart from her immanence in history. She is transcendent precisely by her involvement in the history of man and the world. And this involvement is not something accidental; it enters into her very constitution. The Church was not first formed somewhere outside time and space and then brought into relationship with the world. She came into being in the world, in and through the living response which men and women make to God's gift of Himself in Christ. The Church does not yet exist as a constituted reality apart from the experience which men have of God and the response they make to His revelation in Christ. This is something that happens in a particular situation in which people live and think and are conditioned by it. A Church unrelated to history is therefore an abstraction. It is not a reality.

Even a cursory glance at the history of the Church would bear this out. The considerable variety of forms which Christianity assumed in the early stages of her development is extremely instructive in this regard. It shows not only how unity of faith is compatible with a plurality of forms, but also how this plurality itself derives from the plurality of the milieu in which this faith was lived. Thus, for example, Daniélou has drawn attention to the existence of two types of Christianity in the early centuries, a Judeo-Christian type with its own intellectual categories, modes of worship etc. and a Hellenistic Christian one with its own categories of thought and life-style.² The case of liturgy is

2. Cf. J. Daniélou, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea*, I-II, London 1964, 1973.

particularly interesting. The earliest forms of Christian worship did not differ in many respects from the Judaic one except for the new faith of the community which celebrated it. And later when the Church went out and gradually became the official religion of the Roman empire, she adopted the ceremonies of public gatherings of the time for her own liturgical celebrations. Our liturgical vestments, signs of respect, rubrics etc. are all products of the world in which Christianity took shape and developed. The pluriformity of the liturgy thus derives from the pluriformity of the world in which Christians have lived and worshipped.

The same principle is at work in the formation of doctrines. Christianity did not enter the world with a fixed body of doctrines. It originated as a Gospel, as 'good news' proclaimed by word and deed and received in faith. Faith, to be sure, needs to be understood and expressed in words and symbols. Now, this does not happen in a vacuum, but in a given thought world. Thus the Jewish converts to Christianity interpreted their faith in Christ in relation to the Judaic world with its thought categories. When Christianity came into contact with the Hellenistic world, the same faith was interpreted in relation to this world and was expressed in its thought forms. This is quite natural because only in this way can the Church mediate her faith to a given world and thus become a real presence within it. As a matter of fact Greek categories played a major role in the formation of Christian doctrines. This, however, does not mean that faith can be transmuted into a body of doctrines. Nor can a particular philosophy be canonized as *the* expression of Christian faith except at the risk of the Church's losing her freedom and transcendence. If Christian theology, like all other human thinking, unfolds and develops in response to the demands of the situation in which it finds itself, doctrinal formulations cannot be made absolute or universally binding without their historically conditioned nature being taken into account.

But the tendency towards uniformity and fixity (itself a product of historical circumstances) has often obliterated this historical dimension of the Church's life and thought. As a result, she has tended to become monolithic, structurally as well as theologically. Certain forms which Christianity assumed in the

course of its development in a particular place, or within a particular tradition, came to be regarded as the only legitimate expression of the Church of Christ. This tendency was further reinforced by a theological thinking which presented these forms as necessarily issuing from the Christian faith as such. The tendency towards universalization of the Western Church, which marked colonialist and missionary expansions, shows how deep-rooted such a mentality was. The overall result of this uniformity and fixity has been a twofold estrangement - estrangement from the rest of the Christian world, on the one hand, and from the emerging secular world on the other. This is the context of the twofold dialogue in which the Church is engaged today - ecumenism, on the one hand, and dialogue with the modern world on the other. She is becoming aware of the need to surmount her isolation and is engaged in the task, not in a spirit of conquest but with a willingness to reform herself and move forward. Underlying this is the Church's recognition of her own historicity.

Identity in change

Now the life of the Church revolves between two poles, i. e., between an unshakable fidelity to God in Christ and an unbreakable relationship to the world. She has therefore to ask anew at every moment what it means to live this fidelity on behalf of the given world. Thus the world co-determines the form of Christian life and the concrete mode of the Church's existence. Her life cannot therefore be the fulfilment of a ready-made programme. As the world, which is a constitutive dimension of the Church's life, is not something static but a changing and developing reality, the Church is also bound to change and develop. This need for change is not something imposed upon her from outside, as would appear at first sight, for the transformation of the world is part and parcel of her mission. It is only through change that she can be faithful to her mission, to Christ and to the Gospel, and thus retain her true identity. As Jean Guittou said recently, interpreting the thought of Newman: "The Church should unite in herself truth and life. She should therefore change, rejuvenate herself, renew herself in order to preserve by change her fundametal identity."³

3. *Le Figaro*, 27 août 1976.

It follows that the Church's attitude towards traditions cannot be one of conformism. It has, on the contrary, to be at once critical and creative: critical, because it is not always in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel; creative, because the Church needs to discover and realize the truth of the Gospel anew in every age, transcending her own historically conditioned ways of thought and action. The mere fact that something has come down to us as tradition does not mean that it has to be there for ever as binding. One has to test it over against the Gospel, on the one hand, and the needs of the time, on the other. In fact this is in the very nature of tradition. If the Church is a living organism, her life cannot be a mechanical repetition of the past nor can traditions be a mechanical transmission of ready-made formulas, forms of worship and rules of conduct. Evidently these are the forms in which faith is concretized and transmitted and as such they have their value and utility. But they are not ends in themselves but time-conditioned expressions and concretizations of the faith. In other words: "The Christian tradition does not consist in the first place in the transmission of a series of truths, but in a living communication of the experience which the Apostles and the Disciples had of the Lord, and which is transmitted from one generation to another. This communication is undoubtedly concerned also with 'truths' but they are truth in Him, and because He is that 'truth'".⁴ Therefore, fidelity to Christ and his Gospel should not be confused with fidelity to the *status quo* or the traditions.

However, the Church has often been inclined to take a negative view of the forces of change, identifying herself with the existing order. In this she has been guided not only by her interests as an institution and those of her members, but by a theology which, with its static view of reality, legitimized the *status quo* as something unchangeable. Today the Church has come to see something more than mere negativity in change. The significance of Vatican II lies in the fact that it was basically a debate on the methodology of understanding the contemporary situation. Opting for openness rather than insulation from the world, the Council has inaugurated a course of reform and renewal. This

4. P. Huizinga & W. Bosset, "Problème juridique autour du Magistère", in *Concilium*, 117 (1976), p. 11.

requires, no doubt, parting with inveterate habits which in course of time have been identified with Christian life as such. How deep-rooted these are can be seen from the reaction of fear and anxiety which the moderate reforms of the Council have provoked in certain quarters. For as long as the static view of things prevails, change can be viewed only as a betrayal of the Church and the Gospel. The case of Mgr Marcel Lefebvre is typical.⁵ Lefebvre would like to freeze the Church at a particular point of her development, i. e., Trent and the Counter-Reformation. In his view, "the only attitude of fidelity to the Church and the Catholic doctrine, for our salvation, is the categorical rejection of reform".⁶ It is thus, for example, that the Mass of Pius V becomes "the perennial rite", "as if it were something absolute without any possibility of modification".⁷ However, such a slavery to the past can only cut the Church away from the mainstream of life and impede the Gospel from being a living force in the world of today. To be true to her mission the Church needs to ask ever anew what it means to be faithful to Christ and his Gospel in a given situation and reform her structures and activities accordingly.

The present context

It is not intended here to spell out the tasks which the present life situation imposes on the Church. These vary from country to country, as the situation in one is not the same as that in another. This article, therefore, will conclude with a few remarks on the tasks facing the Church in India today.

It is obvious that the world which is tending to become one demands a widening of the perspectives of thought and action. The shrinking of the world through increasing facilities of communication between peoples and nations has brought cultures and religions closer to one another than ever before, and this has made co-operation and sharing between cultures and religions an absolute necessity. In India the Church is faced not

5. Cf. Y. Congar, *La crise dans l'Eglise et Mgr Lefebvre* Paris 1976.

6. Cited by Congar, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

only with a great and ancient culture but also with some of the world's great religions. All cross-fertilization, dialogue and sharing between the religions in India can awaken and enliven both Christians and non-Christians and be of benefit to all. But a meeting in depth demands that we perceive clearly the relativity of the concrete forms and expressions of the different religious traditions and distinguish that which is central from the peripheral. Here a deep awareness of the historicity of religions and a historical-critical method will prove helpful. Being a transplantation of either Western or Eastern forms of Christianity, the Church in India lacked, till recently, the energy and vigour to make contact with the Indian mind and spirit and enrich herself by sharing in the great heritage of Indian religiosity. Similarly, it needs to be asked if Christianity as a religion has made any deep impact on Indians. The fact is that for many Christianity has been an exotic cult and organization, if not also an alien power closely allied with Western colonialism. The case of the centuries old Syrian Church of Kerala is not very different from that of others. It has been claimed that Kerala's Syrian Christian community is Indian in culture and Christian in religion. But the question is whether this Christianity has met with India's religions and culture in any depth: whether it has been able to contribute something new and creative to the people among whom it exists.

In a country where the majority of people live in poverty, the Church cannot be indifferent to the efforts made to abolish it. With her charitable institutions the Church in India has contributed to the alleviation of misery. Her schools and colleges have helped on, in some measure, the enlightenment of thousands of Indians. But relief and charity are of temporary and limited value. They treat the symptoms rather than the disease. What is needed is the reform of institutions and structures that create and perpetuate poverty and misery and the framing of a new socio-political and economic order at both national and international levels. In fact the very form of traditional charity has become dubious in the present circumstances. In the West, for instance, it has become fashionable to parade the poverty and misery of the "third world" (a concept which is itself a creation of the West's feeling of superiority), evoke the pity of the "first

world" and collect aid on behalf of the underprivileged. Watching Western T. V., one sometimes wonders whether there is not the desire perhaps unconsciously, to derive a sort of invidious satisfaction by contrasting the affluence of the West with the misery of the "third world". Whatever that may be, when it comes to measures that would affect the power and affluence of the Western world, the reaction is decidedly negative. Here perhaps lies the reason for the opposition of the Capitalistic West to Socialist movements in general. What has been said of the rich and powerful nations of the West is equally true of the rich and powerful sections of the developing countries. Therefore, the question before the Christian conscience today is whether it can satisfy itself by throwing a few scraps, perhaps a few more than yesterday, to the Lazarus who sits at the door or whether it should rather prepare him a seat at his side. In this matter a sense of history will definitely help the Christian to read the signs of the times, but whether he acts according to his perceptions will depend on his own decision.

Rue de Sèvres 78
Paris 7

George Puthumana

Alienation or Liberation ?

Towards an Evaluation of the History of Christianity in India

There is a plethora of books on the history of Christianity in India. Few of them, however, attempt any theological evaluation of it by examining its origin, claims and achievements. Some even neglect to present the facts as they are, being apparently unable or unwilling to tell history from legends. The scope of this article is not to attempt a comprehensive study but rather to point out the need for one and to formulate some hypotheses towards it.

We begin with a brief review of facts in the first part, paying attention to details only when the historicity or the interpretation of the points in question is controverted. In the second part an evaluation of the facts is attempted, with the conviction that Christianity should be a liberating rather than an alienating force already here and now.

PART ONE: A REVIEW OF FACTS

Christianity arrived in India at different times and in various forms: Eastern, Roman Catholic and Protestant. This is treated in the following sections: I, The Problem of Origins; II, Eastern Christianity in India; III, The Syrian Church and the Church of Rome; IV, The Jacobite and Mar Thoma Churches; V, Catholic Missions; VI, Protestant Missions.

I. The problem of origins

Undoubtedly, the Syrian Christians of Malabar date back to the first millennium of our era. It is not clear if the India mentioned in the list of the Fathers of Nicea (325) and in connection with Pantaenus (2nd cent.), Theophilus (354), Bishop Mar Dudi (between 295-390), the Indian priest Daniel (c. 425) and Mana of Riwardashir (c. 470) refers to our India and if it does, to South India.¹ Cosmas Indicopleustes who

visited India between 520-525 speaks of having seen Christian communities "in the island of Taprobane [Ceylon] in Further India, and in the land called Malē where the pepper grows." "And in the place called Kalliana there is a bishop usually ordained in Persia, as well as in the isle called the isle of Dioscoris (Socotra) in the same Indian Sea."² Cosmas' Malē (*Malai* means mountain in Tamil) is in all probability the Malabar coast. The place designated by Kalliana is not known; it could be Kollam (Quilon), Kalyan or some other place. The two sets of copper plates, variously known as Tarisa Church, Quilon or Kottayam plates prove beyond doubt the existence of Christianity in Malabar in the 9th century.³ The plates have been variously dated. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai assigns the first set of plates to 848-49 A. D.,⁴ which seems to be acceptable. The grant is made to the Tarisa Church built by Marivan Sabrison at Quilon, giving it some rights and privileges. The donor is the local ruler Ayyanadigal of Vēṇādu. The language is Malanāṭṭu Tamil or early Malayāḷam. The second set of plates is probably a later copy of a grant simultaneously given with the first set. It is written in the Vaṭṭeluttu and Grantha scripts and is signed in Pahlavi and Hebrew. The two Persian crosses one at Mylapore and the other at Kottayam, belong roughly to the same period, and bear the same inscription in Pahlavi.⁵ A third cross found also at Kottayam has in addition the text of Gal. 6:14 in 10th century Syriac. All these prove undeniably that India's Syrian Christianity has a tradition going back to the second half of the first millennium of our era. From Marco Polo's visit to India in 1293 till the arrival of the Portuguese, several Western travellers and missionaries have left us accounts of the Christians in Malabar.⁶ Some of them speak of other Christians outside Malabar. The French Dominican Jordan met Nestorians at Thana near Bombay (1320),⁷ and the Italian Franciscan Oderic (1324-25) came across Nestorians at Mylapore.⁸

(a) Traditions about St. Thomas

There is a strong claim though not supported by any existing records or evidence, that St. Thomas the Apostle brought the faith to India. This claim is based entirely on the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* and the Malabar and Coromandel traditions.

i. *Acts of Thomas*: This is an apocryphal work, written probably at Edessa or somewhere in Upper Mesopotamia, towards the close of the second or the beginning of the third century.⁹ The *Acts* describes how the evangelization of India fell to the lot of Judas Thomas¹⁰ As he was unwilling to go to India, he was sold as a slave by Jesus to Habban the merchant.¹¹ *Incidentally*, Thomas is not only a skilled carpenter¹² but also the twin brother of Jesus.¹³ Habban takes Thomas to India by ship.¹⁴ Thomas preaches there, works countless miracles and wins many converts including members of royal families.¹⁵ Even King Gundaphar, for whose service he was bought, and his brother Gad, accept baptism.¹⁶ When Thomas goes to the kingdom of Mazdai, the converts in Gundaphar's kingdom are placed under Deacon Xantippus (Xenophon).¹⁷

Thomas' message is clearly other-worldly, even anti-sexual, and naturally it disrupts marital relationships.¹⁸ As a matter of fact he was put to death because he was responsible for breaking up the marriages of King Mazdai and his relative Charisius.¹⁹ Thomas accepted martyrdom on a mount, being pierced with spears by four soldiers.²⁰ Before dying, Thomas appointed Siphor a presbyter, and Iuzanes (Vazan), the king's son, a deacon.²¹

Historians agree that the *Acts of Thomas* contains much that is incredible.²² Does the *Acts* contain even a nucleus of historical truth? Some authors think so.²³ Basing their claim on it, they affirm the Indian Apostolate of St. Thomas. But the fact that coins have been found with the name of an Indo-Parthian king Gondophernes (Mahārājā Gudapharasa or Guduhrasa), belonging to the first century A. D. according to some scholars²⁴ does not support the view of the evangelization of the area (the present Afganistan and North India) by Thomas. At the present stage of research the *Acts* can be considered only to be a collection of legends around the apocryphal tradition that the twelve Apostles divided the whole world among themselves for evangelization. Thomas seems to have been made the twin brother of Jesus, because of a misinterpretation of "Thomas ho legómenos Dídyμος" (Jn. 11:16; 20:24; 21:2).²⁵ In fact, Thomas was also made the twin brother of Elieser²⁶ and Lysia.²⁷ He was probably made a carpenter because he was designated the brother of Jesus, the son of a carpenter (Mt. 13:55).

Tradition has it that various countries were evangelized by Thomas: Parthia, Ethiopia, India and China. An earlier tradition, mentioned by Origen (185-251),²⁸ Rufinus (c. 345-410/411)²⁹ and Socrates (380-450)³⁰ assigns Parthia to Thomas.³¹ Ephraem (c. 300-365),³² Gregory Nazianzen (330-390),³³ Ambrose (340-397),³⁴ Jerome (c. 340-420)³⁵ and Gregory of Tours (538-594)³⁶ speak of Thomas' apostolate in India.³⁷ Now, all these traditions are obviously late and no more than claims unsupported by evidence. They all seem to echo the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* and similar legends.

ii. *Traditions of the Tomb*: The South Indian traditions speak of Thomas' martyrdom and burial at Mylapore. One of the earliest and most definitive references to Thomas' tomb at Mylapore is made by Marco Polo (1292). He says that the tomb is frequented by both Christians and Moslems: "For the Saracenes also do hold the saint in great reverence and say that he was one of their own Saracens and a great prophet...."³⁸ This seems to have been the case even in the early 16th century, when the Portuguese first visited Mylapore.³⁹ The 9th century *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* speak of King Alfred as having sent votive offerings to India to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew.⁴⁰ Two centuries later when William of Malmesbury refers to this, he adds the further detail that the king's representative returned with brilliant exotic gems and aromatic juices in which the land abounded.⁴¹ As we go back in time, however, this tradition becomes vague and general. Isidore of Seville (7th cent.)⁴² speaks of Calamina in India as the place of Thomas' martyrdom, Gregory of Tours (6th cent.)⁴³ and Ephraem (4th cent.)⁴⁴ speaking in more general terms indicate India as the place of his death.

The South Indian traditions claim that the grave at Mylapore contained the body of the Apostle.⁴⁵ The Portuguese, who excavated the tomb, in fact, found bones of the skull, spine, legs, arms and other parts of a body, all in a very decayed state, and a piece of iron in the shape of an olive leaf.⁴⁶ They thought they had found the remains of the Apostle.⁴⁷ The view of the early Portuguese writers, however, is contradicted by the Western tradition that the body was transferred to Mesopotamia. Ephraem specifically says that the body was transferred to Edessa by a merchant.⁴⁸ Gregory of Tours also speaks of this.⁴⁹ The later

Portuguese writers, however, made an ingenious attempt to harmonize the discovery of the body at Mylapore with the tradition of the transfer, by saying that only part of the body was taken to Edessa, the rest being left in the tomb at Mylapore.⁵⁰

There is, however, an earlier tradition which says that Thomas died a natural death and was buried at Edessa.⁵¹ The tradition of the transfer of the Apostle's body from India to Edessa seems to have had its origin in an attempt to reconcile the tradition of the Indian tomb with the burial in Edessa.⁵²

The Mylapore grave, no doubt, is of considerable antiquity⁵³ though it is difficult to say for certain that it belongs to the first century. The problem is not so much one of the antiquity of the grave as of the identification of the remains. What makes the tradition suspect is that it seems to have its origin in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* and to grow more and more concrete and definite as the centuries pass. A. M. Mundaden has rightly pointed out: "As it has been noted above, almost in every century (from the time of the *Acts of Judas Thomas* there is groping for the tomb of the Apostle in 'India'. As time went on there was progress in identifying it with Calamina and then with Myluph and so on. The clear *terminus ad quem* of this progress is the tomb in Mylapore, which is definitely identified as the tomb of the Apostle by the thirteenth century".⁵⁴

iii. *Coromandel Tradition*: This tradition contains details regarding Thomas's apostolate in Coromandel or Cōlamanḍala.⁵⁵ Thomas is said to have built a church at Mylapore and to have performed some miracles. He carried a huge log of wood which even elephants could not move; he paid the workers their wages with sawdust or rice, which became gold coins. Thomas was killed on a hill with an arrow by a low-caste hunter, according to one version (a tradition already recorded by Marco Polo) and with a lance by his enemies the Brahmins, according to another.⁵⁶ Two hills near Madras have been associated with the martyrdom of the Apostle, the Little Mount and the Big Mount.

It would seem that the Coromandel tradition has been influenced by other traditions. Before commenting on the historical

value of the Coromandel tradition, let us examine the Malabar tradition, which is more detailed and definite.

iv. *The Malabar tradition*: The Syrian Christians of Malabar believe strongly in the apostolate and martyrdom of Thomas in South India.⁵⁷ There are oral traditions and songs containing this belief. The written accounts of this tradition date back to the 16th century. Besides songs like *Mārgam Kali Pāṭṭu*, *Viradiyān Pāṭṭu* and *Rambān (Rabban) Pāṭṭu*,⁵⁸ there are local traditions as well connecting Thomas with particular places, churches and even families.

The oral tradition says that in 52 A. D. Thomas landed at Māliankara near the ancient port Cranganore (formerly Muziris). According to the Rambān Song which some writers feel "a better representation than all other accounts"⁵⁹, Thomas came with Haban (Habban) at the invitation of the king of Coromandel, reaching Māliankara in 50 A. D. After a short stay on the Malabar coast, Thomas left for Coromandel, and from there proceeded to China and returned to Mylapore after some time. He is said to have divided his time between Malabar and Coromandel. He performed numerous miracles – the Rambān Pāṭṭu speaks of 1249 (1189?) minor and major miracles – and converted hundreds of high caste Hindus, mainly Brahmins (Nambūdiris) on the Malabar coast. Here again the Rambān Pāṭṭu gives exact figures: The total number of the converts was 17680 (17310?); of these, 6850 were Brahmins 2800 (2500?) Kṣatriyas, 3750 (3780?) Vaiśyas and 4280 (4180?) Sūdras. The Kṣatriya (warrior caste) converts included members of the royal family and even the Chera king himself. For these converts Thomas founded seven Churches. In Coromandel Thomas built miraculously a church at Mylapore and converted the Chola king and his brother. Thomas provided his Christians with bishops and priests. In Coromandel the king's brother Paul and on the Malabar coast Kepa, or Peter, were appointed bishops. The Rambān song speaks of two bishops, seven priests and four Rabbans. The Malabar tradition assigns Mylapore as the place of the Apostle's death. He was pierced to death with a lance by furious Brahmins for destroying, with the sign of the Cross the temple of the goddess Kāli. The martyrdom is supposed to have occurred on July 3, 72 A. D.

It is interesting that some of the miracles are claimed both by the Coromandel and the Malabar traditions, for example, the miracle of the log of wood, the gold coins and the dead boy.⁶⁰ Both the traditions depend heavily on the *Acts of Thomas*: the story of Thomas being brought by a merchant to India,⁶¹ the miraculous construction of the royal palace,⁶² the marriage feast he attended on his landing near Cranganore,⁶³ the conversion of princely couples and other members of royal families to continence,⁶⁴ the miracle of the hand,⁶⁵ the appointment of a prince to rule over the converts in Coromandel,⁶⁶ and finally his martyrdom: his being pierced with spears on a mount.⁶⁷

In some of the details, however, the South Indian traditions differ from the *Acts*. Thus in the miracle of the hand, in the *Acts* it is a lion that kills the man who struck the Apostle, but in the Malabar tradition a tiger does it. In the *Acts* four soldiers put Thomas to death by piercing him with spears, but in the Malabar tradition it is the Brahmins who pierce him with a lance. There seems to have been, therefore, an adaptation of the *Acts* to the local scene. But is it possible that the *Acts* depends on the South Indian traditions? As the *Acts* are undeniably older and less anachronistic than the South Indian traditions, any dependence of the *Acts* on these traditions has obviously to be ruled out. The South Indian traditions state that Thomas built churches for the converts. This is a clear case of anachronism, because the tradition of building churches is not older than the second century.⁸ Christians before that period assembled for the breaking of bread in private houses. That Thomas ordained priests and bishops is also obviously anachronistic, for these offices were not so distinct in the first century.⁶⁹ Strangely enough the Malabar tradition speaks of Thomas' appointing even Rabbans. He is said to have administered the sacrament of confirmation on a later visit to those whom he had baptized before. But the fact is that the Malabar Christians knew no confirmation distinct from baptism before the arrival of the Portuguese.⁷⁰

The Syrian Christians of Malabar claim that St. Thomas converted, in addition to Jews, only Brahmins (Nambūdiris) and other high caste Hindus.⁷¹ This presupposes the existence of a rigid caste system (cāturvarṇya) in the first century. But the fact is

that "even in the first century of the Christian era, the South seems to have felt little influence from the Aryan culture of Northern India" and that the "Dravidian society was still freed from the yoke of the Brahmin caste system."⁷² This is clear beyond doubt from the Sangam works of the early centuries of our era'.⁷³ Kuṟavas, Pulayaṣ, Paravas, Paṟayas, Pāṇas, Mukkuvas and others, who were later branded as low and impure, were, then respectable communities.

Even kings, priests and scholars came from among them.⁷⁴ It is only in the 7th or 8th century that the Brahmin dominance begins.⁷⁵ The rigid caste system, as we know it, came into force in Malabar only towards the close of the first millennium.⁷⁶ Thus the tradition that St. Thomas converted people only from among the Brahmins and other high castes is clearly anachronistic.⁷⁷ It reflects the social organization of the society of a much later period. It is also strange that this tradition knows nothing of converts from Buddhism or Jainism which had a considerable following in Malabar till the close of the first millennium.⁷⁸

Historically speaking, therefore, the South Indian traditions are no more reliable than the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*.

There is, it is true, a strong belief among the Malabar Christians concerning their high caste origin and descent from St. Thoma's converts.⁷⁹ But the fact that something is *strongly* believed by a community is no proof that it really happened. What historical value are we prepared to give to the claims of the small Moslem community in Kashmir which strongly believes that they have descended from Jesus Christ, and that they possess his grave? In Kerala there have been people who believed strongly that this part of India was reclaimed from the sea by Paraśurama and given to the Brahmins as a gift. The claim that the Thomas tradition is written in the hearts of the people and is therefore reliable⁸⁰ is indeed very unreliable. Similarly, "the community of Thomas Christians who claim their origin as Christians from the apostle Thomas"⁸¹ is not a "monument" that has any historical value, if it can be called a monument at all. Again, the possibility of an Apostle coming to evangelize India in the first century does not make it a fact, however "repugnant it may be to think that Christianity was preached from the be-

ginning only in the Roman empire and all the twelve Apostles went westwards to the parts of the Roman empire".⁸²

If this is all we can say in the present state of historical research, how are we to account for Eastern Christianity in India? What in fact is the origin of the Thomas tradition held so tenaciously by "the men of the soil or men who were intimately connected with Malabar"?⁸³ To answer these questions, we should perhaps examine another Malabar tradition.

(b) Traditions of Syrian immigration

There is a unanimous tradition about the immigration of Syrian Christians to Kerala: A Syrian merchant called Thomas Cana landed at Mālian kara with a bishop, some priests and a group of families and settled down in Cranganor.⁸⁴ These Syrians were welcomed by the king of the place. In a plot of land there, which he got as a royal gift, Thomas Cana built a church. The division of the Syrian Christians of Malabar into Southists and Northists is traced back to these immigrants. The tradition, as recorded by Gouvea, represents Thomas Cana as having had two residences, one on the southern side of the river dividing Cranganore and the other on the northern side of it. His legitimate wife was in the southern residence, while a concubine of his lived in the northern one.⁸⁵ It is from these women of Thomas Cana that the Southists and Northists have their origin. The Southists generally claim that they are the descendants of Thomas Cana and the other Syrian immigrants who preserved their racial purity; even now they are endogamous and take special care to preserve the purity of their blood. The Northists are, according to this tradition, the descendants of those immigrants who mixed with the natives. The Northists retort by saying that they are the descendants of the high caste converts of Thomas the Apostle,⁸⁶ and the Southists the descendants of Thomas Cana from a native servant maid.

According to a letter which A. Monserrate wrote 1579 from Cochin to the Jesuit General, there were two opinions about the origin of the Syrian Christians of Malabar: One was that all were descended from the disciples of Thomas the Apostle, and the other that all were descended from Mar Thomas the Syrian

merchant⁸⁷. This Thomas had two wives, one a noble woman and the other a slave, though belonging to a noble caste.⁸⁸ Monserrate held that these Christians were descended not only from the disciples of Thomas the Apostle and from Mar Thomas, the Syrian merchant, but also from the many Nairs who were converted to Christianity.⁸⁹ Now these Christians were divided into two communities not only because they descended from the two wives of Mar Thomas, but also because they lived on the northern and southern side of Cranganore.

The tradition of the Syrian immigrants conflicts with the St. Thomas one in some respects. If it is true that the whole Syrian community of Malabar descended from Thomas Cana and his companions as some traditions claim, it does not make sense to say that the Northists are the descendants of the converts of St. Thomas. In fact, the way in which Thomas Cana and the other immigrants are brought into the picture is interesting.⁹⁰ It is said that the Syrian immigrants came to help the St. Thomas Christians who were suffering from a lack of bishops and priests. If the Apostle converted kings and ordained priests and bishops, as the Malabar tradition claims, there must have been a very stable Christian community. That being so, it would be hard to explain its sudden lack of priests and bishops! What is more the Malabar tradition knows of families with an unbroken chain of priests from the time of the Apostle.⁹¹ Finally, we are hard put to it to understand how a whole colony of people—men, women and children, with priests and a bishop—came to Malabar just to help a community suffering from lack of priests and bishops. The reason given for the immigration would seem to be an attempt to harmonize the tradition of immigration with the St. Thomas tradition. Certain aspects of the stories connected with the Apostle's work in South India, in fact, seem to be adapted from a later Syrian immigration. The saintly Sapor and Prodh, who belong to a later Syrian immigration, are said to have built a church in Quilon the construction of which is attributed by some to the Apostle himself.⁹² To build it Sapor and Prodh brought a huge log of wood from Ceylon.⁹³ The miracle of the log of wood in connection with the building of a church by St. Thomas in Quilon according to the Malabar tradition, and in Mylapore, according to the Coromandel tradition, has already

been referred to. Perhaps, it is more than accidental that both Thomas the Apostle and Thomas Cana land at Māliankara and build a church at Cranganore.⁹⁴ Some claim quite anachronistically, as it has been pointed out, that the church at Cranganore was built by Thomas the Apostle, and others, by Thomas Cana. Thomas Cana "obfuscates", to some extent, "the tradition concerning the Apostle of the same name".⁹⁵ The immigration tradition calls obviously in question the Malabar tradition about the apostolate of St Thomas. A historical redaction of the various elements of these traditions will perhaps show that, in this case, the first is indeed the last and the last the first.

Much about the Thomas Cana tradition is, no doubt, legendary.⁹⁶ Not much historical value can be given to the copper plates of royal privileges said to have been granted to Thomas Cana, for the plates are not extant.⁹⁷ To make matters worse, the so-called translations are at variance.⁹⁸ But historians are unanimous about a Syrian immigration to Malabar. The Tarisa church plates and the Persian crosses found at Kottayam and Mylapore give this tradition about the Syrian immigration some historical value. The tradition about Sapor and Prodh is made, to some extent, credible.

The evidence we have today shows that there were, at the same time, Christian communities at Mylapore, Cape Comorin and Thana.⁹⁹ The Armenian Christians, whom Barbosa came across at Cape Comorin, must have been of Syrian origin.¹⁰⁰ Even in the 16th century the Malabar Christians recited prayers like the Our Father and Hail Mary in Syriac, though the majority of the people did not know the language.¹⁰¹ This seems to have been a relic of earlier times, when Syriac was the spoken language of the immigrants or was at least understood by them. It is not rare that immigrants retain their language wherever no communication with the natives is called for. Until recently Syrian Christians were called upon to be intermediaries between high castes and low castes, to prevent pollution of the former by the latter,¹⁰² the implication being that the Syrian Christians, as descendants of foreign immigrants, were outside the caste system.

It would be safe, therefore, to conclude that the initial care of Eastern Christianity in India comprised Syrian immigrants

from the Persian empire. Their arrival must have been in the 9th century, as is clear from the Tarisa church plates, or earlier in the 6th century, if Cosmas' *Malē* is Malabar. Naturally, these communities of Syrian immigrants increased through conversion and inter-marriage with the native people.

It is possible that there were conversions also from Buddhism and Jainism, for these religions were being successfully fought by Brahminism, which was on the ascendant then.¹⁰³ It is significant that Christians and Moslems make use of such Buddhist terms as *palli* (church), *mārgam* (religion) and *mārgam-kūdal* (conversion)¹⁰⁴ Some of the converts might have come from among the Brahmins. After the caste system became rigidly established, those ostracized for violating the caste regulations perhaps embraced Christianity.¹⁰⁵ Historically speaking, however, it is difficult to justify the claim of most Syrian Christian families of Malabar that their forefathers were Brahmins. A claim to high caste origin is a claim to nobility. In India it is not rare that a community claims a higher status in the caste hierarchy and adopts customs and practices of the higher caste. If the community possessed economic and / or political power to back up its claim, this attempt at Aryanization or Sanskritization may have succeeded in the course of time. That, in fact, is how many of the ruling families of Kerala became Kṣatriyas.¹⁰⁶

II. Eastern Christianity in Malabar

We know little about the life of the Syrian Christians of Malabar before the 16th century. This is also the case with Christian communities which such European visitors as Jordan and Oderic found at Thana and Mylapore. There are, however, some accounts of the life of Malabar Christians in the 16th century.

(a) Social life

Some of them speak of "a number of churches, 50 settlements and 100,000 Christians" in Malabar.¹⁰⁷ The Syrian Christians called Nazaranis were mostly farmers and traders. They had a respectable place in the caste-ridden society of Malabar.¹⁰⁸ They were regarded as equal to the Nairs, Malabar's warrior

caste, at times even superior to them. Imitating the Brahmins and other high castes, the Christians too kept away from certain low-caste communities to avoid 'pollution'. When 'polluted', they performed ablutions to be cleansed. They seem to have shared some privileges with the Brahmins and the temple prostitutes.¹⁰⁹ Among these were riding on elephants, wearing gold ornaments, sitting in the presence of kings etc. However, the claim that they were equal to the Brahmins and the rulers¹¹⁰ seems to be an exaggeration. We do not know a single instance of Brahmins and kings bowing to the Christians. The contrary was common. These Christians had a military tradition.¹¹¹ Bishop Jacob wrote to the Portuguese king that he could muster more than 25,000 soldiers from the Syrian Community.¹¹² But the claim that they were the best soldiers in all Malabar and that the main strength of the native lords' armies rested on them¹¹³ is hard to believe. In the second millennium, the Nairs were the mainstay of the army in Malabar. In ordinary life the Christians did not differ much from their Hindu neighbours, though the Christian women had a distinctive and modest dress of their own.¹¹⁴

(b) Ecclesiastical relations

At the time of the arrival of the Portuguese, the Syrian Christians were under bishops sent by the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.¹¹⁵ We do not know for certain when this connection started. The testimony of Cosmas Indicopleustes, the letter of Patriarch Iso'yahb III (c. 650-660) to Simon of Riwardashir and the Persian crosses certainly point to an early connection.¹¹⁶ Moreover, this is clearly affirmed by the manuscript *Vatican Syriac* 22 of 1302, which speaks of Patriarch Yahaballaha III and Jacob the Metropolitan of India.¹¹⁷ Thus, we can say that the hierarchical relationship of the Malabar Church with Seleucia was centuries old.

The Church of Seleucia definitively accepted the position of Nestorius, rejecting Ephesus as the work of Cyril, at the Synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 486.¹¹⁸ During the period of its great missionary expansion into Persia, India, Mangolia and China, this Church was Nestorian and independent of the Church of Rome, though there were some friendly contacts between Seleucia and Rome.¹¹⁹ This was the case till 1551, when a dissident group

sought union with Rome while the others remained Nestorian.¹²⁰ The dissidents elected John Sulaqa as their Patriarch and he was confirmed in this office by Pope Julius III. From the 1550's the Malabar Syrians were under bishops sent by the successors of Sulaqa, though his authority did not remain unchallenged by his rival.¹²¹ Thus, the Malabar Church was Nestorian in communion till the 16th century.¹²²

(c) Church organization

The see of Seleucia was, however, not always able to supply the churches under its care with bishops.¹²³ They seem to have reserved not only the right to ordain priests and to consecrate altars but also to administer baptism.¹²⁴ There were even some restrictions on the celebration of the Eucharist by the native priests.¹²⁵ The administration of the sacraments had to be paid for.¹²⁶ Naturally those who could not afford the money were forced to put off the reception of the sacraments. That is why the missionaries later on came across old, unbaptized 'Christians'.¹²⁷ It was difficult for the prelates from Seleucia-Ctesiphon to come often to Malabar, and when they came, they administered the sacraments to great numbers. In order to make as many ordinations as possible, even children were ordained *šammāšas* (clerics) and *kattanārs* (priests).¹²⁸ The *šammāšas* received instruction from the elderly priests of the parish, but the training was often not up to the mark.¹²⁹

Clerics and priests were ordained for the local church (parish). The priests had equal rights among themselves with an older priest as *primus inter pares*.¹³⁰ Towards the middle of the 16th century, one of the priests assumed the role of a leader of the whole Syrian community of Malabar and he was called the archdeacon.¹³¹ The priests were, as a rule, married, and the wife of a priest, called *kattattiār*, enjoyed a privileged position.¹³² Laymen in the parish formed some sort of a council and were in charge of the parish administration, especially in financial and social matters.¹³³

(d) Beliefs

Living amidst Hindus, it was natural that the Malabar Syrians should have been influenced by some tenets of Hinduism. The Synod of Diamper criticized them for believing in rebirth and fatalism and for holding that each one could be saved according to his religion.¹³⁴ It would seem that there were Christian teachers who provided Hindu pupils with facilities for Hindu worship.¹³⁵ There were also Hindu teachers who taught Christian children Christian prayers.¹³⁶

The Syrian Christians believed in the Trinity and the Incarnation.¹³⁷ But their Christological belief was naturally Nestorian: The union of 'divinity' and 'humanity' in Jesus was viewed on the model of a moral union, and there was a strong emphasis on Christ's humanity.¹³⁸ Mary was called the mother of Christ rather than the mother of God.¹³⁹ Christ was believed to be present in the Eucharist with his body and blood but, here again, there were works that considered the presence to be something symbolic or virtual.¹⁴⁰ The Council of Ephesus was rejected as the work of Cyril of Alexandria,¹⁴¹ and the condemnation of Nestorius was compared to the condemnation of the Apostles and of the faith.¹⁴² Cyril was consigned to the nether world, while Nestorius was venerated as a saint.¹⁴³ Nestorius, Theodore and Diodore were commemorated in the Mass, and the breviary contained offices dedicated to them.¹⁴⁴ In the Mass the patriarch of Seleucia was commemorated as "*patriarcha nostra, Pastor universalis totius ecclesiae catholicae.*"¹⁴⁵ Though the Nicene canons that accorded a sort of priority to the successor of Peter in Rome among the patriarchs was accepted by the Nestorian Church,¹⁴⁶ there were writings that accused the Church of Rome of having fallen from the true faith.¹⁴⁷

(e) Worship

It is not certain whether the Malabar Church had any sacraments other than Baptism, Orders and the Eucharist. There was no Confirmation independent of Baptism.¹⁴⁸ Baptism was performed without consecrated chrism.¹⁴⁹ In all probability there was neither auricular confession nor the anointing of the sick, though there seemed to have been some sort of a public confession of sins.¹⁵⁰ Marriage was performed normally at home, and rarely

in a church.¹⁵¹ It would seem that the Eucharist was not celebrated regularly even on Sundays except during Lent. The bread used for the Eucharist was leavened, mixed with a certain oil believed to have been consecrated by Christ.¹⁵³ According to some accounts, the bread used in the Mass was made of rice.¹⁵⁴ It is not clear if the claim that toddy was used instead of wine is true.¹⁵⁵ Anyway, it is certain that these Christians had been committing "the error" of communicating under both species.¹⁵⁶ The cross had almost the place of a sacrament, and they had an extreme veneration for it.¹⁵⁷

Although the liturgy was Chaldean, and thus on the whole something foreign and unintelligible to the people, the congregation participated in it devoutly.¹⁵⁸ It had several elements borrowed from Hinduism. When the child received its name it was fed with rice for the first time.¹⁵⁹ The names of Christians were mostly Biblical.¹⁶⁰ Some churches resembled Hindu temples, and others were Chaldean in style.¹⁶¹ Before entering a church Christians carefully washed their hands and feet.¹⁶² At marriages, the bride was presented with a veil, and the important ceremony was the bridegroom's tying of the *tāli* (a medal) around the bride's neck.¹⁶³

III. The Syrian Church and the Church of Rome

The Portuguese established themselves, at the beginning of the 16th century, as a power to be reckoned with in the coastal regions of India. This marked not only the beginning of Western dominance in Asia but also the opening of a new chapter in the expansion of Christianity. In search, as they were, of "Christians and spices", the Portuguese were glad to come across the Syrian Christians in India.¹⁶⁴ Living amidst non Christians, the Malabar Christians were happy to meet the Portuguese.¹⁶⁵ They presented Vasco da Gama with a staff of authority and sought protection from the king of Portugal promising him allegiance in return.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, the Syrian Christians of Quilon later on approached the Portuguese chief Albuquerque, requesting him to restore some of the privileges they had been deprived of.¹⁶⁷ They also asked for a priest to instruct them in the faith.¹⁶⁸

a) Process of Romanization

The friendship between the Portuguese and the Syrian

Christians did not last long. As the contacts became closer, the Portuguese found that the religious beliefs and practices of the Syrian Christians were very different from their own.¹⁶⁹ They discovered that the Chaldean bishops of the Syrian Christians were sent by the Nestorian patriarch of Seleucia and that some of the dogmas they held were Nestorian. Syrian Christianity was found to lack some of the sacraments. Having set out to conquer the Eastern world for Christ, the Portuguese authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, felt responsible for these old but "erring" Christians.¹⁷⁰ In 1455 Pope Calixtus III gave the Portuguese Vicar General of the Order of Christ jurisdiction of overseas territories, and Pope Leo X created, in 1514, the diocese of Funchal for the whole of Portuguese Asia.¹⁷¹ This feeling of responsibility for the Church in India increased with the erection of the diocese of Goa in 1534 and its elevation to primatial see in 1558.¹⁷² The Portuguese missionaries who came into contact with the Syrian Christians tried to win them over to the Catholic faith.¹⁷³ Naturally, the Nestorian bishops, whom the Syrian Christians revered, were in the way of these missionaries. Mar Jacob, one of the two Chaldean bishops of Malabar, could be persuaded to co-operate with the missionaries and was given an annual salary by the king of Portugal.¹⁷⁴ In a letter to the king, in 1530, he wrote expressing the hope that the Syrian Christians of Malabar would eventually accept the "usage of the Church of Rome", though some were opposed to it.¹⁷⁵ Mar Jacob also persuaded his Christians to sell pepper directly to the Portuguese.¹⁷⁶ The other bishop is said to have offered some resistance, but he seems to have been silenced without much difficulty.¹⁷⁷ Mar Jacob eventually retired, or was forced to retire, to the Franciscan monastery at Cochin, where he died c. 1550.¹⁷⁸

The seminary the Franciscans opened at Cranganore in 1541 (?) trained Syrian youths for the priesthood.¹⁷⁹ They were to become instrumental in the Romanization of the Malabar Church. Romanization meant for the missionaries not only the suppression of beliefs and practices characteristic of Nestorianism, and besides, the unification of the Malabar Church with Rome, but also conformation, in every way, to the Latin rite in its Portuguese version.¹⁸⁰

Meanwhile there was trouble in the Nestorian See of Seleucia. A dissident group submitted to Rome.¹⁸¹ In 1556 the uniate patriarch sent to Malabar two Chaldean bishops, Mar Elias and Mar Joseph.¹⁸² But the Portuguese, intent on putting an end to the patriarchal rule of the Syrian Christians, detained them. They were taught to say the Latin Mass.¹⁸³ Although Mar Joseph was allowed to go to his flock in Malabar, he was twice deported on charges of heresy. Proved orthodox, all the same, he died in Rome.¹⁸⁴ Incidentally, it was Mar Joseph who introduced the use of unleavened bread and Latin vestments in the Malabar liturgy.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile Mar Abraham, who had first been sent to Malabar by the Nestorian patriarch,¹⁸⁶ eventually joined the uniate group in Seleucia and returned to Malabar.¹⁸⁷ He was clever enough to escape the Portuguese attempts to detain him. He went to Rome and obtained papal approbation of his appointment.¹⁸⁸ With the help of the Jesuits Mar Abraham conducted a synod at Angamale in 1583, which corrected books containing errors, and imposed celibacy on the priests.¹⁸⁹ His manifest collaboration with Rome was due partly to the threat posed by the presenee of Mar Simon, a rival bishop from the Nestorian See of Seleucia.¹⁹⁰ All the same, there were allegations that Mar Abraham relapsed into Nestorianism.¹⁹¹ His death in 1597 marked the end of Seleucia's long jurisdiction over Malabar.

b) Synod of Diamper

Pope Clement VIII, by his briefs of 1595 and 1597, commissioned the Archbishop of Goa to appoint a Vicar Apostolic to the See of Angamale.¹⁹² Alexis de Menezes who became Archbishop of Goa at that time, was a man of extraordinary ability, zeal, and strength of will.¹⁹³ He decided to bring the Malabar Christians definitively under Rome and subject them to the See of Goa.¹⁹⁴ He effectively blocked the arrival of bishops from Seleucia and appointed Archdeacon George Administrator of Angamale. Menezes started visiting the Syrian churches in Malabar, preaching against heresy, forbidding the prayer for the Patriarch under the pain of excommunication, conferring Holy Orders and administering Confirmation. Although the Archdeacon opposed this exercise of authority, Menezes did not pay much attention to him. The native rulers, especially the Raja of Cochin, were won over to the Portuguese side. Wherever he went,

he sowed seeds of faction and left behind him groups to support him. He saw to it that the Archdeacon signed a document, renouncing Nestorianism, accepting the supremacy of the Pope, and promising co-operation in convening a synod.

It was convoked on June 20, 1599 at Diamper (Udayampērūr), a small town within the sphere of Portuguese influence.¹⁹⁵ The archdeacon's choice, however, was Angamale.¹⁹⁶ It lasted for seven days and was attended by 133 priests, 20 deacons and 660 lay representatives. The Archbishop's ruthless but winsome tactics, supported by the Portuguese garrison, made the Synod a 'success'. All the decrees were accepted without substantial changes. These made the Syrian Christians renounce Nestorius and Nestorianism,¹⁹⁷ accept the Pope and the Roman Catholic faith as formulated by Trent¹⁹⁸ and agree to receive only prelates sent by Rome.¹⁹⁹ The reforms aimed not only at correcting superstitions²⁰⁰ and simoniac practices,²⁰¹ and the observance of caste,²⁰² but also at making the liturgy and other religious practices conform to the Latin rite.²⁰³

After the Synod Menezes visited the Syrian churches, saw to the execution of its decrees, purged liturgical books of Nestorian errors, and set fire to books suspected of containing heresy.²⁰⁴ As a result of the vandalism of this fanatic prelate, many precious documents must have been lost.²⁰⁵ When he returned to Goa, towards the close of 1599, he had accomplished all that he had wanted to.

The Synod of Diamper, to a great extent, brought to completion the Romanization of the Syrian Church in Malabar, the beliefs and practices of which had borne the stamp of Nestorian orthodoxy. As a matter of fact, it did much more, for there was the Latinization of an Eastern Church, making it a victim of Portugal's politics and ecclesiastical colonialism. Although there were political and ecclesiastical interests at work, the Latinization was at the service of a rather forced unification of a non-Roman Church with Rome.²⁰⁶ Historically, therefore, it is wrong to describe the whole affair as the Latinization of a people who had always been Roman Catholic, as some Syrian Catholic writers of Malabar say.²⁰⁷ At the same time, it is not wholly correct to say that it was the Synod of Diamper that brought the Syrians into the Roman fold.²⁰⁸ The truth is

that the Malabar Church had already been in the process of becoming Roman, a process which had begun about the 1520's and gained momentum in the 1550's. The Malabar Church was, to some extent, Roman Catholic even before Diamper, which only crowned the process of Romanization. The liberal use that Menezes made of excommunication before the Synod would not have made sense, as some Syrian Catholic writers point out, if the Syrians were all heretics at the time of Diamper.²⁰⁹

(c) The Coonen Cross revolt

Francis Roz, the Jesuit professor of Syriac at the Vaipicotta Seminary who was closely associated with Menezes in conducting the Synod of Diamper, was appointed Bishop of Angamale in 1599.²¹⁰ On Bishop Roz fell the task of effecting the changes proposed at Diamper.²¹¹ This he did with his characteristic thoroughness, making the Chaldean liturgy conform to the Latin, retaining however the East Syrian language. He was not prepared to share authority with the Archdeacon, as the Chaldean bishops used to do. This brought him into conflict with the Syrians. Although Archbishop Britto, who succeeded Roz, was more conciliatory, the Syrian resentment of the Jesuits grew and reached a climax at the time of Archbishop Garcia who was as overbearing as Roz.²¹² The new Archdeacon was in no mood to submit meekly to the Archbishop. The conflict came to a head when a foreign Syrian bishop called Ahatalla, whose identity still remains a mystery, arrived in India in 1652, and was detained by the Portuguese at Mylapore.²¹³ Ahatalla succeeded, however, in informing the Syrians of his arrival. He claimed to have been sent by the Pope, and when he was being transported to Goa by ship, the Syrians gathered at Cochin and asked for their "patriarch" to be handed over. This request was denied; and the Syrians who were naturally furious, gathered on January 3, 1653 at Mattancherry and swore that they would no longer be under the Jesuit rule.²¹⁴ All the Syrians, except a few hundred, became a party to this oath, known as the Coonen Cross Oath.²¹⁵ The Archdeacon was elected bishop, and was consecrated by twelve priests.²¹⁶

Meanwhile Rome sent a special mission to Malabar to bring an end to the schism.²¹⁷ Joseph Sebastiani, an Italian, and

Vincent Maria, a German, both Carmelites, arrived in Kerala in 1657. They succeeded in winning back some twenty-eight churches to the Roman communion, though they failed to reconcile the Archdeacon now exercising the functions of a bishop. All refused again to be under the Jesuits. Sebastiani, who went to Rome to report the matter, returned consecrated bishop in 1661.²¹⁸ Many churches returned to Rome. By this time, the Dutch had overcome the Portuguese on the Malabar coast. Cochin fell to the Dutch in 1663, and the foreign missionaries were asked to leave. Sebastiani, making use of the extensive powers he had, decided to consecrate a successor.²¹⁹ The Malabar priest Chandi Parampil (Alexander de Campo) was elected and consecrated, and the leader of the separated group was excommunicated.²²⁰ By 1663, some eighty-four churches accepted Roman obedience, and only some thirty still remained separated.²²¹

(d) Malabar Syrians and Rome

After Chandi Parampil, the Malabar Syrians were mostly under Latin prelates.²²² The majority of these bishops were under the Propaganda, the rest being under the Padroado.²²³ There was often a conflict between the Propaganda and Padroado jurisdictions.²²⁴ That the former were mostly Carmelites and the latter Jesuits made matters worse. The approach of the Carmelites to the Syrian community was in general more cautious than that of the Jesuits.²²⁵ Their emphasis was on visiting the parishes, instructing the clergy, and thus remedying their inadequate theological formation.²²⁶ Much attention was paid to the training of the candidates for priesthood, the Malpanates were abolished and the seminary system was introduced.²²⁷

There was still much tension between the Carmelites and the Syrian Christians.²²⁸ The efforts of the separated Syrian Christians, who had become Jacobites, to join Rome did not meet with success, and the missionaries were accused of being responsible for it.²²⁹ To further the cause of the Jacobite re-union with Rome, Joseph Kariattil went to Rome and Lisbon with Paremakal Thomas Kattanār.²³⁰ Kariattil was made the Archbishop of the Padroado See of Cranganore, but while returning he died in Goa. Paremakal Thomas was made Administrator of the Syrian Christians.²³¹ After Paremakal and Sankoorikal, the

Catholic Syrians were under the foreign prelates of the Latin rite.²³² Naturally the Syrian Catholics were dissatisfied, and their dissatisfaction came to a head. Two prelates, Rokkos and Mellus, came from the Catholic patriarch of Chaldea.²³³ As this was without Rome's approval, it caused a split in the Syrian Catholic community in Malabar. The small group which separated eventually submitted to the Nestorian patriarch in 1907.²³⁴

While the demand for indigenous bishops was increasing, the Carmelites were trying to preserve their mission.²³⁵ Finally, Rome separated the Syrians from the Latin jurisdiction of Verapoly, establishing two vicariates in 1888.²³⁶ In 1896 these were reorganized into three vicariates with native prelates.²³⁷ In 1911 a vicariate was created exclusively for the Southists,²³⁸ and in 1923 the Syrian Christians got a hierarchy of their own.²³⁹ These were later further extended and divided.²⁴⁰ This step obviously had a stabilizing effect on the Syrian Catholic community of Malabar.

In the fields of education and charitable activities, the Church has contributed much of late, though its participation in the socio-economic and political fields has been, on the whole, communally oriented.

IV. The Jacobite and Mar Thoma Churches

We have seen how the Coonan Cross Oath of 1653 split the Syrian community into two, and have followed the development of those who retained the communion with Rome established in the course of the 17th century. These were called *Palayakuttukār* (the old party) and the others *Puttenkuttukār* (the new party).²⁴¹

(a) The Jacobite connection

Although the leader of the non-Roman group started exercising episcopal functions, it was generally felt by many that his consecration was not valid. Hence, requests were made to Babylon, Alexandria and Antioch to send a bishop to set things right.²⁴² The Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch who responded by sending Bishop Mar Gregorios in 1665.²⁴³ It was thus that the separated Syrians became Monophysites or Jacobites and accepted

the West Syrian liturgy, though as Nestorians they had held a position opposed to Jacobitism. The liturgy for which they had fought was Chaldean of East Syrian. However, Jacobite beliefs and practices became prevalent only gradually.²⁴⁴ In the beginning, the Jacobites differed from the Syrian Catholics only in such matters as the use of leavened bread and the Eastern calendar in the liturgy. It is not quite certain whether the Archdeacon, consecrated bishop by the twelve priests - Mar Thoma I - was re-consecrated by the Jacobite Prelate.²⁴⁵ What we know for certain is that his successors too had problems about the validity of their consecration. It was called in question by foreign prelates in India, who seem to have made use of their power to consecrate bishops in order to further their own influence and interests. There have been instances of these foreign bishops consecrating rival native Metropolitans of the Malabar Jacobites.²⁴⁶ For example, in 1772 the Antiochian Prelate Mar Gregorios consecrated Mar Kurilos, who left Travancore and Cochin under government pressure and established his church at Thozhiyur.²⁴⁷ Similarly as if he were unaware that there was a Jacobite Metropolitan in Malabar in 1842, the Antiochian Patriarch consecrated Deacon Mathew Palakunnath as Mathew Mar Athenasius who was later to head the reformation party in the Church.²⁴⁸ This gave rise to factional fighting and forced Antioch itself to intervene against Mathew Mar Athenasius.²⁴⁹ Finally in 1875 Patriarch Peter III arrived in Malabar to oppose the Reformation party, excommunicated Mathew Mar Athenasius and divided the Jacobite Church into seven dioceses, each with a bishop who executed a bond of loyalty to the Patriarch. Thus, he saw to it that the authority of the See of Antioch was firmly established in Malabar.²⁵⁰ Conflicts arose, however, when Patriarch Abdallah arrived in Malabar in 1909, and claimed jurisdiction over the temporalities of the Church.²⁵¹ This was denied him by Metropolitan Dionysius VI, who was then excommunicated by the Patriarch. The Patriarch also consecrated rival prelates, and a part of the Malabar Jacobite community accepted his jurisdiction. The others who formed the majority, brought in the ex-Patriarch Abdul Massih, who had been deposed by the Sultan of Turkey, and got a Catholicos appointed for Malabar.²⁵² The struggle dragged on for decades, and each party - one called the Patriarch's and the other the Bishop's - strengthened its position by getting

new bishops consecrated.²⁵³ After prolonged litigation at several levels, in 1958, the Bishop's party won its case in the Supreme Court of India.²⁵⁴ Soon afterwards, however, the two factions reached a compromise and all accepted the authority of the Catholicos, a nominal spiritual power being given to the patriarch of Antioch.²⁵⁵ After a truce for over a decade, however, the trouble has started again between the supporters of the foreign Patriarch and the native Catholicos.²⁵⁶ About three-fourths of the community have accepted the Catholicos, and the Patriarch has consecrated another Catholicos for his supporters in Malabar.²⁵⁷

(b) Union with the Roman Catholic Church

Ever since the split of 1653 bishops of the group that eventually became Jacobites have tried to achieve some kind of union with their separated Roman Catholic brethren.²⁵⁸ Both Mar Thoma IV and Mar Thoma V wrote to Rome, asking to be accepted into the Catholic communion, with the request that they should be allowed to use leavened bread in the Mass.²⁵⁹ The requests were not granted, probably because of the ecclesiastical power-politics of the Catholic missionaries in Malabar at the time. Moreover, the motives of the Jacobite prelates were called in question. Mar Thoma VI or Dionysius I even sent a delegation (Kariattil and Paremakal) to Rome for this purpose, and he is said to have embraced Catholicism (under force?) for a short time, but returned to the Jacobite fold again.²⁶⁰ Finally, when the factional fights heightened, Mar Ivanios of the Bishops Party opened correspondence with Rome and embraced Roman Catholicism in 1930 with his suffragan bishop.²⁶¹ A large number of people with some priests followed him. Although Mar Ivanios seems to have transacted the correspondence with Rome on behalf of the other bishops as well, the step he took was considered "a betrayal of the mother Church" by those who remained Jacobite or Orthodox.²⁶² The uniates were allowed by Rome to keep the Antiochian Rite, but had to observe priestly celibacy.²⁶³ Thus came into existence the Syro-Malankara Church.

(c) The impact of the Reformation

About the turn of the 19th century, the Anglican missionaries came into contact with the Jacobite Syrian Church.²⁶⁴ A mission of help was soon organized and some sort of a union or associ-

ation was contemplated between the two Churches.²⁶⁵ However, in contrast to the Catholic missions of the 16th century, the Anglican mission did not aim at absorbing the Syrian Church but at helping to reform itself.²⁶⁶ For this purpose the missionaries started a seminary for the training of Jacobite priests at Kottayam. Benjamin Bailee translated the Bible into Malayalam and printed it with types made with his own hands. In the beginning the relations were cordial, but after some years, differences of opinion arose between the Jacobite Metropolitan and the missionaries.²⁶⁷ Some of the missionaries did not show much understanding of many of the customs of the Jacobite Church, for example, veneration of Mary and prayers to the saints or for the dead. The Anglicans considered these Roman Catholic and unscriptural.²⁶⁸ The conflict came to a head with the Anglican Bishop Wilson's proposal of a reform of the Syrian Church, and in the Mavelikara Synod of 1835 the Metropolitan and the Syrians rejected the proposals under the plea that the Syrian Church was under the jurisdiction of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and could not do anything without his permission.²⁶⁹ Thus the co-operation with the Anglican missionaries came to a sad end.

However, some sections of the Jacobite Church had imbibed Anglican beliefs, and of these a few thousand (six or twelve?) joined the Anglican Church, now forming part of the Church of South India.²⁷⁰ Another section wanted to remain within the Church and reform it. Abraham Malpan, a former professor at the seminary at Kottayam, started the movement, later known as the Reformation Party (*navikaraṇakkār*).²⁷¹ It began with the modification of the Eucharistic liturgy. The Reformation party sent a nephew of Abraham Malpan to Antioch, and the Patriarch consecrated him metropolitan of Malabar in 1842. On his return to Malabar the new bishop, Mathew Mar Athanasius, claimed to be the legitimate ruler of the Jacobite Church there on the authority of the Patriarch. Although he had the foreign Missionaries and the Travancore Government on his side, his claim was challenged by the ruling Metropolitan with the support of the Patriarch. The Reformation Party was now forced to reject the Patriarch and his authority. The conflicts continued till the Reformation Party and their bishop lost all rights to the Church property in the famous Seminary Case in 1889. They formed themselves into a new Church called the Mar Thoma Church.²⁷²

Though influenced by the Reformation, the Mar Thoma Church has retained its Eastern identity and has had in general an enlightened leadership.²⁷³ Already in 1888 the Church started an Evangelistic Association, and began missionary work among the depressed castes: something revolutionary for the caste-conscious Syrian Churches in Malabar.²⁷⁴

V. Catholic Missions

The beginnings of the Roman Catholic missionary work in India date back to the close of the 13th century.²⁷⁵ However, there had not been any significant or lasting results. It was mainly the Portuguese who planted Roman Catholicism on Indian soil.²⁷⁶ Most of the converts they brought into the Church from the Malabar coast were from the lower strata of society, suffering under the discrimination of the existing social system. Towards the middle of the 16th century, mass conversions occurred from the Paravas of the fishing areas.²⁷⁷ These were being oppressed by Moslems, and were given protection and assistance by the Portuguese, whose power was then in the ascendant. There were conversions from the higher castes in Goa, which had been a Portuguese possession from 1510.²⁷⁸ The arrival in India of Francis Xavier in 1542, one of the greatest missionaries of modern times, gave new vigour to the missions under the Portuguese Padroado.²⁷⁹ In India, Xavier worked intensely among the Paravas to confirm them in the faith, as they were insufficiently instructed.²⁸⁰

The Jesuit mission at Madura opened up new vistas in Catholic missionary work under Robert De Nobili.²⁸¹ De Nobili was the first missionary in India who tried to present Christianity in an Indian garb, divesting it of some of its alien elements. He lived as a sanyasi, and went to the extent of avoiding low castes in order to bring Christianity to the Brahmins. His efforts had some success, though De Nobili had to bear much opposition even from other missionaries, and Rome disallowed the experiment in 1744.²⁸²

In the following centuries, Indian Catholicism suffered much from the conflicts between the Padroado and the Roman Propaganda.²⁸³ Later on this was made good by the advent of more and more missionaries from Europe and America.²⁸⁴ Most

of the people, won over to the faith by these missionaries, came from the lower castes and the aborigines.²⁸⁵ The Church did much to better the lot of the underprivileged, and those discriminated against and the exploited, by establishing schools, hospitals etc.²⁸⁶ In this respect, mention must be made of the mass conversions of the adivasis by the Belgian Jesuit mission of Ranchi in the second half of the 19th century.²⁸⁷

VI. Protestant Missions

The Dutch who replaced the Portuguese in several places on the Indian coast in the second half of the 16th century were traders, and not greatly interested in missionary work.²⁸⁸ This is true also of the English who gradually established their supremacy in India in the second half of the 18th century.²⁸⁹ Moreover, the Protestant Churches of Europe had not yet awakened to the need of announcing the gospel to the non-Christians.²⁹⁰ Thus, Protestant missionary work started in India much later than Catholic.

a) Beginnings

Protestant evangelization in India had its beginning in 1706 at Tranquebar, a small Danish possession in Madras.²⁹¹ Under the royal patronage of Denmark, two German missionaries, Ziegenbalg and Plütsch began working among the Tamils.²⁹² Ziegenbalg's missionary methods, a study of the Indian languages, translation of the Bible and the training of the catechists and Indian pastors, were almost to become models for Protestant evangelization in India.²⁹³ The Tranquebar mission eventually spread also to other places in India. The Indians thus converted came mostly from the lower classes.²⁹⁴

Because of a shortage of missionaries from Halle in the early 19th century, these missions were entrusted to the Lutheran mission (Leipzig) and the Anglican missions.²⁹⁵

b) Anglican missions

The English Baptist missionary, William Carey, opened a new mission at Serampore, the Danish territory, near Calcutta.²⁹⁶ Carey and his associates followed, in many ways, the lead given

by Tranquebar, but the emphasis they laid on general education was something new, and this contributed to a certain permeation of the Indian milieu with Christian ideals through the Indians educated in missionary schools.²⁹⁷

The change in the anti-mission policy of the British East India Company in 1813 gave new vigour to the missionary enterprise.²⁹⁸ The Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the London Missionary Society (LMS) opened missions in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Travancore.²⁹⁹

c) Other missions

In the course of the 19th century, the other Churches and Sects too made their appearance on the Indian scene, and missionaries came from different countries of Europe, America and Australia.³⁰⁰ The whole of India was dotted with missions belonging to the different Churches. As with the Catholic missions, conversions were mostly from the low castes and the aborigines.³⁰¹ Only in some places did large number of Sudras embraced Christianity.³⁰² From the low castes and the aborigines conversion was often in the form of mass movements.³⁰³ Through their charitable, educational and relief activities, the missions were helpful in ameliorating the miserable material conditions in which the low castes and aborigines lived, and in improving their cultural standards.³⁰⁴ The missionaries did much to relieve the suffering of those affected by the recurring famines in the second half of the 19th century, and this won them a large number of converts from among these.³⁰⁵

d) Ecumenism

The division among those announcing the message of reconciliation was something that discredited Christianity in the eyes of critical Indians.³⁰⁶ This made the missionaries aware of the scandal of disunity among the Christians and the need for Christian unity.³⁰⁷ Although competitions and feuds were not few among the missionaries belonging to various denominations, from the beginning there were instances of co-operation and mutual understanding among the Protestant missions in India.³⁰⁸ More significantly, thought was given not only to co-operation, but also to achieve Church unity. These efforts culminated in the for-

mation of the Church of South India in 1947, consisting of Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists and the South India United Church.³⁰⁹ This is one of the few successful experiments in Church unity. A similar union of Churches has been effected with the creation of the Church of North India, in 1970.

PART TWO: AN EVALUATION

An impartial presentation of facts is absolutely necessary for any serious historical study worth the name. Has justice been done to this pre-requisite in studies on the history of Christianity in India? Considering the generally apologetic nature of Church history, this is not something to be taken for granted.

I. History or wishful thinking?

Tisserant's observation about the works on the Portuguese period that they could hardly be called impartial,³¹⁰ may well apply to most works on the history of the Church in India. This is especially the case with those on the origins and orthodoxy of Eastern Christianity in India.

a) Origins

As we have seen, there is little historical evidence to support the idea of an Indian apostolate of St. Thomas. Still most Kerala writers on this topic are bent on making out a case for it.³¹¹ For this purpose, they make use of the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*, the presumption being that it contains a historical nucleus. Interestingly enough, some of them pass over in silence, on purpose, it would seem, those accounts that would make Thomas and his acts quite ridiculous and incredible.³¹² For instance, the *Acts* that Thomas was the twin brother of Jesus,³¹³ a claim which conveniently escapes the notice of these authors. The reason given for his death or martyrdom is his separation of Mygdonia and queen Tercia from their husbands.³¹⁴ His main apostolate seems to have been a fight against holy matrimony, a clear case of man separating what God has joined (Mt. 19:6).³¹⁵ Many writers on the topic seem to take legendary and apocryphal narratives for history.³¹⁶ This happens in the case of the story of St. Thomas' sending Addai to Edessa, in fulfilment of a written promise Jesus had given to its ruler Abgar to

send him a disciple of his after his ascension, to cure him of rheumatism. Between his North Indian and South Indian missions, Thomas is said to have gone to be with Jesus' mother in her last hour. It is not surprising that few of these historians are struck by such obvious anachronisms as St. Thomas building churches and setting up crosses, or his converting in Kerala, besides Jews, only high caste Hindus at a time when *cāturvarṇya* was not established there. P. Podipara goes even to the extent of saying that "there is no anachronism nor anything else (in the South Indian tradition about Thomas' apostolate) that may in any way weaken its force".³¹⁷ Even authors who seem to have noticed some of the difficulties in these traditions— A. M. Mundaden speaks of Thomas Cana as one who, "to some extent, obfuscates the tradition concerning the Apostle of the same name"³¹⁸ —are inclined to take them as historical because of their definiteness and clarity.³¹⁹ Mundaden has rightly noted that the tradition of the Mylapore tomb becomes more and more definite as time passes.³²⁰ But he takes this as a sign of its credibility,³²¹ as if a tradition about a historical event, which is irrepeatable and for which there is no contemporary evidence, becomes more credible just because it acquires more definiteness and clarity with the passage of time. This explains, partly at least, the uncritical acceptance of the native traditions about St. Thomas's apostolate in South India as basically independent of the apocryphal *Acts*, though these traditions are of a much later origin than the *Acts*.³²² They are said to be independent of the *Acts* on the ground that some of their details are very concrete and, in fact, specific to the South Indian scene.³²³ It is forgotten, however, that borrowed traditions are normally adapted to the life-situation of the borrowers. This is the case, as we have pointed out, with the South Indian traditions about Thomas in several details.

Sometimes, the argumentation in favour of the tradition concerning the apostolic origin of Malabar Syrians is juridical rather than historical: "In the light of all that we have brought out above, shall we say that the Malabar and the Coromandel traditions in their substance enjoy more than what one would demand of traditions that are in possession? There are no rival traditions nor rival tombs nor rival Thomas Christians in the whole world."³²⁴ The implication of this argumentation is evident.

It is meant to establish the apostolic origin of Eastern Christianity in Malabar as historical. A "tradition in possession" is understood here in the manner of an article in possession. Legally, an article in my possession is mine, if there are no other claimants to it. But the tradition about an event is not like a thing one possesses. That a tradition claims that something has happened is no reason to say that it has really happened. The question is whether it can adduce evidence for its claim, and not whether it has rivals or not.

(b) Orthodoxy

We have seen that the Malabar Church was clearly Nestorian before its gradual unification with the Church of Rome in the 16th century and the acceptance of Jacobitism by a section of it in the 17th. The Syrian Church of Malabar was ruled by bishops sent by the Nestorian Patriarch of Seleucia; its faith and worship had an undeniably Nestorian character. But the Malabar writers on the Syrian Church are, on the whole, inclined to deny or minimize the Nestorian connection of their community in the pre-Portuguese period.³²⁵ Syrian Catholics differ from their Jacobite or Orthodox counterparts in the way they do this.

They claim that the Malabar Church was Roman Catholic from the beginning, in spite of its relations with Seleucia-Ctesiphon.³²⁶ In the face of the undeniable fact that the Malabar Syrians had no relations with the bishop of Rome till the 16th century, it is maintained that this happened because of the country's isolation from the West and that there was no deliberate renouncing of Roman Catholicism or papal primacy.³²⁷ The Nestorian doctrines found in their liturgy and theology are disposed of with the contention that these did not mean anything for the bulk of the people who did not understand Syriac and were not aware of the Christological controversies.³²⁸ Perhaps there is some truth in this argument; but to insist on it is to make ourselves look fools. If it were true, even Christians of the Orthodox rite and Jacobites would be Roman Catholics. The implication is that all sincere non-Catholics are anonymous Roman Catholics. This is very much like making sincere non-Christians anonymous Christians. P. Podipara would go a step further.³²⁹ On the one hand, he would make Seleucia accept the Roman

primacy on the basis of the importance that some liturgical formulae and the so-called Nicene canons give to the bishop of Rome. On the other hand, much is made of the friendly relations that some patriarches had with Rome, and it is conveniently forgotten that the other Eastern Churches too had occasionally such contacts with Rome. He wonders "whether the hierarchical dependence of the Thomas Christians on Seleucia was strictly juridical,"³³⁰ though it is clear beyond doubt that the Malabar Syrians were ruled by bishops sent by Seleucia, who even reserved to themselves many powers ordinarily allowed to priests in other Churches.³³¹

Non-Catholic Syrian writers of Kerala reject the claim that the pre-Portuguese Church of Malabar was Roman Catholic.³³² Some Jacobite writers, however, would make the early Malabar Church Jacobite or Orthodox. P. T. Geevarghese, who like Metropolitan Mar Ivanios, later on embraced Roman Catholicism, divided the history of the Malabar Church into four periods: i. The Jacobite Period (from the beginning to 1490), ii. The Nestorian Period (1490-1599), iii. The Roman Catholic Period (1599-1653), and iv. The Jacobite (renewed) Period (1653...).³³³ Some other authors too attempt to "prove", that Malabar was under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox or Jacobite See of Antioch rather than Nestorian Seleucia.³³⁴ With the increasing struggle for autonomy for their Church, there is a tendency among recent Jacobite writers to modify the claim to the Jacobite or Antiochene connection. They like to emphasize the pure Orthodox faith of the pre-Portuguese Malabar Church, without accepting unreservedly the jurisdiction of foreign prelates over Malabar.³³⁵ Some would even claim that the Malabar Church was, for all practical purposes, autonomous, though she received bishops from other Churches.³³⁶

(c) History and wishful thinking

Interestingly enough, most Malabar Syrian writers on the subject in question can be critical when the interests of their Church or community are not at stake. Thus Jacobite or Orthodox writers reject rightly the Syrian Catholic claim that the Malabar Church was always Roman Catholic and that it accepted the primacy of the bishop of Rome.³³⁷ Even authors who cannot distinguish legend from history, when they speak of the origins

of Malabar Christianity, can make a scathing criticism of some of the obviously anachronistic elements in the Syrian Catholic interpretation of the Thomas tradition.³³⁸ Although it is not clear "if the India mentioned (?) in the list of the Fathers of Nicea and in connection with Theophilus Dudi, Mar Komai and Mana was really our India",³³⁹ some of the orthodox authors do not hesitate to identify it with Malankara.³⁴⁰ Of late there have been some attempts to modify the earlier tendency of playing down Malabar's dependence on Seleucia and emphasizing its connection with Antioch.³⁴¹ This is quite understandable if we take into consideration the struggle of a large section of the Jacobites to assert their independence of Antioch. Also, the renewed emphasis on the claim to the Indian See of St. Thomas is to be understood in this context.³⁴² This is a claim that involves obvious practical interests, as it is employed as an argument in civil suits meant to achieve and cement the ecclesiastical autonomy of the community.

Considering the value attached to tradition in Christian communities, especially in India, it is no wonder that all Syrian Christian writers are keen on defending the apostolic and high-caste origin of their communities. In this process, it is natural that arguments to the contrary are suppressed and even palpably weak ones resorted to. This is why the Malabar Syrian writers, as Paul Varghese has pointed out, cannot convince unprejudiced historians.³⁴³ Some of the arguments are apparently designed to protect what their authors consider the interests of their community rather than expose the facts of history regardless of whether they are flattering or not. It is probably no exaggeration to say that many works on the history of the Syrian Church in Malabar are communal histories,³⁴⁴ though the word 'history' is not quite appropriate here, considering the fear of real history their authors have and the amount of wishful thinking they indulge in. They betray, in fact, a lack of understanding of what history really means. It would seem that many do not realize that we cannot undo our past and that the only way to overcome the undesirable facts of our history, whether communal or personal, is to face up to them rather than suppress them.

II Alienation or liberation ?

Christianity has been in India for more than a thousand years. It is often asked why Christians are still a small minority (2.6%) of the population, trailing far behind not only Hindus but also Moslems. The question is understandable, considering the phenomenal success that Christianity has had elsewhere in increasing its numerical strength. One reason is that in contrast to the countries of central Europe and the Americas, the majority of India's people have been, and are, adherents of highly developed religions closely integrated to their culture and social life and so more resistant to Christianity than the religion and culture of the primitives.³⁴⁵ Secondly, Christianity in India lacked the political backing, which it had in Europe and the Americas, that induced large masses of people to embrace the faith.³⁴⁶ This was true even in the most aggressive phase of colonialist proselytization. To be sure, the Portuguese were fanatically missionary, but they controlled effectively only the seaboard of India, and had to give place to the Dutch and the British by the second half of the 17th century. The Dutch and the British were more commercial-minded; they were neutral, at times even unfriendly, towards large-scale proselytism. Even after the British had unchallenged mastery over India and after their attitude to missionary work became more positive, they did not want – nor were they in a position – to force Indians into the Christian fold. Thirdly, the way in which the different types of Christianity appeared on the Indian scene and the message or messages they proclaimed were not so inviting as to evoke a favourable response.³⁴⁷ This brings us to the question what Christianity has meant for the people of India, both Christian and non-Christian and why this has been so and not otherwise.

Religion, if it is worth the name, should transform and fulfil man and his society. Being a historical reality, its impact should find expression in a visible manner. Our concern here is to assess as far as possible Christianity's impact on the people of India. How far has Christianity been a transforming influence on them? Has it been a message of fulfilment for them? Has it been a liberating rather than an alienating force, reconciling rather than dividing the people?

a) Eastern Christianity

Eastern Christianity has been in India for over a millennium. Perhaps this is a remarkable achievement in perseverance.³⁴⁸ But the question is what kind of Christianity it is that has persevered. As has often been pointed out, Malabar Christianity has adjusted itself to its environment, adopting some of the customs and manners of its Hindu neighbours, especially those of the high castes.³⁴⁹ In day-to-day life, the Christians spoke the language of the place and lived and acted like the Indians. The Malabar Christian community was, and still is, in this sense, socially less alien than the Goan, Anglo-Indian or Eurasian ones which looked and felt more European than Indian. Laudable as it is, however, the Syrian Christians' adaptation to the Indian environment does not represent either the incarnation of Christian values in India or the Christianization of Indian values in depth. It was more a juxtaposition of some Christian and some Indian elements than a discerning understanding and integration of both.³⁵⁰ In the long history of the Malabar Church, we do not come across anyone who has given serious thought to the meaning of Christian beliefs and practices and to those of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. Christian doctrines and practices seem to have been nothing more than traditions mechanically received and passed on from one generation to the next. Religiously speaking, the Malabar Church seems to have lived in a state of infantile dependence on its parent body, the Chaldean Church, except for occasional borrowings from her Hindu environment.³⁵¹ The Syrians of Malabar enjoyed a measure of material prosperity and education, but surprisingly they produced no theologians and there was no serious discussion of religious matters, though they had dealings with high caste Hindus very much engaged in religious thinking. They borrowed not only their liturgy, but also their theology from the Chaldean Church.³⁵² Both were in a foreign language understood only by a few and were developed in a foreign land with a view to meeting the needs and problems of that *milieu*. It is doubtful whether the Malabar Church had even a catechism in the language of the place before the Western missionaries gave thought to the matter.³⁵³

It is understandable if an uncritical adaptation of the Christian Church to its environment results in a certain denatu-

ing of Christianity. This is the case with the Malabar Syrians' acceptance of a basically inhuman social system like caste. Proud of the place they had managed to attain in the caste hierarchy, the Christians became almost a caste in themselves with their own sub-castes, scrupulously avoiding pollution by the low castes and observing untouchability and unapproachability.¹⁵⁴ Christianity has always accommodated itself to existing social systems, often in an opportunist spirit, to serve the interests of the Church as a whole or its élite. But there have also been prophetic voices protesting against the injustice done. Strangely enough the Malabar Syrian community seems to have wholly lacked this prophetic or "protestant" spirit.¹⁵⁵ It appears to have paid no attention to the Christian belief in universal brotherhood and in the fundamental equality of all, which knows no distinction between Jew and Greek, master and slave, man and woman (Gal. 3: 28): a belief that makes Christianity a force of reconciliation and liberation. For the outcastes of Malabar, the Christians were not in anyway different from the high caste Hindus, as the Christians too had their share in the exploitation the caste system entailed. Here accommodation becomes self-seeking conformism, as the essence of caste discrimination consists in the oppression and exploitation of large sections of the population by those who happen to have power and position. This conformism, as it does away with something that is precious and challenging in Christianity, made the Malabar Syrian community very much like a caste. No wonder India's Syrian Christianity is not known to have offered any challenge to Indian life and thought, as Indian reform religions like Buddhism and Jainism or the more fraternal Islam and the different Western forms of Christianity have done. The basic failure of Malabar Christianity consists not so much in its not having reached out to make fresh converts as in its having been a closed community rather than an open one which accepts all as God's children. The lack of missionary spirit, for which Malabar Christianity has been criticized,¹⁵⁶ is a symptom of its closed mentality which has stood in the way of its being a really free and liberating force.

Even today the caste mentality is far from dead. From the second half of the 19th century, the Syrian Churches, both Catholic and non-Catholic, have been accepting converts from

among the low castes.³⁵⁷ But these are still not fully integrated into the community, though today there are no more separate churches for them. And it is a sad comment on the Syrian Christianity of Malabar that even now, as far as we know, there are no religious or priests, let alone bishops, from among low-caste converts, though their counterparts elsewhere in India have not only religious and priests, but even bishops. There are some religious congregations in Kerala which even today do not accept candidates not only from every rite but also from all communities of the same rite. Further more, the Southist community, both Catholic and Jacobite, continues to be strictly endogamous, taking the utmost care to preserve the purity (?) of their race.³⁵⁸ It is regrettable that Rome blessed this racial apartheid by erecting a separate ecclesiastical unit "pro gente suddistica" in 1911. It is interesting to note that the Southist diocese of Kottayam does not receive converts.³⁵⁹

In the present century, the Syrian Catholics of Malabar have shown an unusual missionary vitality.³⁶⁰ They supply hundreds of priests and religious to other parts of India. However, even in evangelization, they do not seem to be entirely free from communalism. On the other hand, the aggressive attempts to bring new converts, not only into Christianity, but also into the Syrian version of it, reflect partly at least, the still strong caste sentiments of the conservative section of Kerala's Syrian Catholics. In fact, in the social and political life too, the attitude of the Syrian Churches - the other Christians too are no better - is communal, seeking first and foremost the advantage of the communities they represent.

(b) Western forms of Christianity

The converts which the Portuguese missionaries made on the Malabar coast were for the most part from the lower strata of society. They were people who sought to escape the crushing burden of the caste system. The mass conversion of the Paravas was motivated by the prospect of Portuguese protection from the onslaught of the Moslems. Although there were carefully planned attempts to win over caste Hindus, like those made by De Nobili and Beschi, most newcomers, both to Roman Catholicism and to the various types of Protestantism, were from the outcastes and

the aborigines. Only in some places were there sizable numbers from the Sūdra castes. Still fewer were the conversions from the high caste Kṣatriyas or Brahmins. This is but natural. On the one hand, the aborigines were largely animists and the depressed classes were never fully integrated into the Brahmanic religion. Christianity was more attractive to these groups than to the caste Hindus who possessed refined religious beliefs and practices. On the other hand, the high castes stood only to lose by accepting a religion that stood, at least theoretically, for the equality of all, while the low castes and the aborigines had only to gain. They got from the missionaries protection and assistance in their efforts to better their lot and that of their children. The financial aid and educational facilities the missions provided were liberating; the very thought that they had powerful supporters in their coreligionists who ruled the country – however nominally Christian these might have been – must have given the depressed sections a certain self-respect. However condescending and authoritarian the missionaries might have been, the converts were accepted as human beings in their new religion; they were not untouchable or unapproachable. To be sure, Christianity could not abolish all differences and discrimination even among Christians, let alone suppress all exploitation. Nor were all the missionaries interested in achieving this end.³⁶¹ In fact for some of them, caste discrimination and the exploitation of the poor were social realities with which religion had little to do. In some places, even separate churches had to be built for converts of different castes, in some others there was separation in the same church on a caste basis.³⁶² Yet, to the underprivileged in the Indian villages, Christianity opened doors of opportunity to education, improved economic status, human dignity, and a better moral and spiritual life.³⁶³ Although these new Christians were predominantly from groups which were traditionally illiterate, at the turn of this century the rate of literacy among the Christians was three to four times what it was in India as a whole.³⁶⁴ As a result, Christians could enter respectable professions and government services. The Christian missions have helped to improve the lot of thousands of India's underprivileged, long condemned by the accident of birth to poverty, ignorance and misery. The opposition which this generated among the upper classes in the country is some indication of the liberating impact of the Christian missions, however weak and

inadequate it might have been. In the beginning of the 16th century, the Zamorin of Calicut forbade conversion of some of the low castes, as the latter would come under Portuguese protection and their emancipation would undermine the economic foundations of society.³⁶⁵ The kings of Cochin and Cannanore were also likewise opposed to the Christianization of the low castes and "would allow only a few at a time to convert themselves, refusing permission to the able-bodied altogether".³⁶⁶ In 1507, the ruler of Cannanore wrote to the king of Portugal: "I desire that certain people whom I and my Naires (Nairs) have as slaves and who belong to two castes, viz. the Tines (Tiyas) and the Mucoas, should not be made Christians... For with the conversion of these slaves, conflict may arise between our vassals and these people. The Naires derive their income from them and they do not want to lose it".³⁶⁷ The kind of support which missionaries like Lievens gave to the aborigines and outcastes, helping them to free themselves from the oppression of landlords and money-lenders was naturally resented by the upper classes.³⁶⁸ In Malabar converts to the Anglican Church were molested and the missionaries were attacked.³⁶⁹ Rev. George Mathen, a Syrian priest who had joined the Anglican Church, wrote in 1851: "Strong fears exist among all classes of people that the enlightenment of the slaves would be followed by liberation and the consequent ruin of the agriculture".³⁷⁰ Even at the turn of this century, when Faustin Corti protected the low castes in Manglore against their landlords and received many of them into the Church, they were persecuted by the landlords.³⁷¹ In fact, the Hindu opposition to conversion was not wholly due to the questionable methods the missionaries employed to win converts and the colonialist connection of the whole enterprise; in many cases, it was motivated as well by the fear that the lower classes would emancipate themselves, thus endangering the privileged existence of the upper classes.

The network of schools which Christian Churches established all over the country did not quite serve the purpose of the conversion of Indians to Christianity. However Christian education has been, to some extent, emancipatory by the transmission of Western liberal traditions.³⁷² Schools for girls helped to alter the lot of women.³⁷³ The missionaries made a significant contribution to the development of the Indian languages, which were

somewhat neglected because of the undue importance traditionally given to Sanskrit.³⁷⁴ The missionaries spoke and wrote in the language of the ordinary people and this helped the development and democratization of literature, which until then was very much the preserve of the élite.

The missions contributed considerably also to the relief of physical suffering by the introduction of modern medicine, and ideas of public health and sanitation.³⁷⁵ All this not only helped to ameliorate the condition of the underprivileged, but also posed a challenge to thinking Indians. Unlike the Syrian Christianity of Malabar, the Western missions made their impact felt on members of other religions as well.³⁷⁶ The reform movements in India, in general, and in Hinduism, in particular, from the 19th century onwards were not solely or even mainly due to Christian influence. They were influenced by the liberal and humanistic trends in the West with which Indian intellectuals came into contact as a result of their English education. Yet Christianity too had its role in awakening India to the need for greater humanity, freedom and social justice.³⁷⁷ Indian reformers and leaders from Raja Rammohan Roy to M. K. Gandhi acknowledged the impact Christ and the Gospel made on their thinking, but it is doubtful if the Christ they knew and acknowledged was mediated mainly through established forms of Christianity.³⁷⁸

(c) Ambiguities and contradictions

There is another side to this liberating and reconciling influence. If Christianity was emancipatory in some respects, in others it was rather alienating. Christianization, especially in the earlier stages of Western missionary work, was equally Westernization.³⁷⁹ The converts were made to accept not only the Western forms of worship and theology, but also Western ways of thinking and behaviour. The Portuguese bequeathed even their names to their Indian converts.³⁸⁰ Post-16th century Christianity in India has been very much a byproduct of colonialist expansion. And there have been Indian Christians taking pride in their Western connection, adopting Western ways and Western languages like Portuguese and English with a contempt for Indian languages.³⁸¹ The growing tide of nationalism and the advent of Independence have today reversed the trend. All the same, it is

difficult to say that even now the Indian Christian communities have overcome their cultural alienation. Although Christianity brought relief and a measure of emancipation to some sections of the people, because of its understandable alliance with the colonial powers it was forced to be blind to the exploitation and oppression which colonialism entailed. In the struggle against colonial domination, Indian Christians, as a whole, did not play any significant role, though there were individuals, here and there, committed to the cause of Independence.³⁸² Worse still was Christianity's dogmatism that demanded of the converts absolute acceptance of formulated doctrines, making it difficult for the individual to judge and act freely in accordance with his experience, understanding and evaluation of life.³⁸³ In this respect, it must be said, the Christian attitude differed greatly from the basically tolerant Hindu one in which there is respect for people's doctrinal convictions.

III. Conditioning factors and interests

There are certain circumstances and interests that have been decisive in shaping the history of Christianity in India. It is necessary to consider them briefly in order to understand and evaluate Christianity in India.

(a) Ecclesiastical colonialism

It is strange that a Church like that of Malabar, which was relatively prosperous and had thousands of members, had no hierarchy of its own and so was forced to depend on an irregular supply of bishops from Seleucia. In fact, as Tisserant has pointed out, the patriarchs had reserved to themselves the right to consecrate bishops for Malabar and had forbidden the raising of local priests to episcopal dignity.³⁸⁴ It would seem that pecuniary interests played a role in this reluctance to share power.³⁸⁵ The administration of the sacraments, especially those of Baptism and Orders was a source of income. It is well known that the prolonged litigation and division in the Jacobite Church of Malabar originated with the Antiochian patriarch's claim to control the finances of the Jacobite Church.³⁸⁶ In fact, several bishops sent by the patriarch of Antioch are said to have betrayed an unusual degree of avarice.³⁸⁷

(b) Communal interests

It goes without saying that the communalism of the Malabar Syrians was motivated by their desire to preserve their position in the caste hierarchy.³⁸⁸ It was to protect their privileged existence that they approached Vasco da Gama and placed themselves under Portuguese protection, without realizing, of course, the complications and problems this would eventually bring.³⁸⁹ The welcome extended to Archbishop Menezes by the Malabar Christians, when he came to Malabar, was motivated by the desire not to spoil the pepper trade with Portugal, which then controlled the seas.³⁹⁰ At the Synod of Diamper, some of the Syrian representatives even demanded an assurance from Menezes that if they took the oath of allegiance to Goa, the king of Portugal should get them protection and exemption from certain local taxes.³⁹¹ Menezes, of course, gave them the assurance, but he took care to write to the Raja of Cochin that this was only in spiritual matters. In fact, considerations of prestige and pecuniary interests seem to have played a major role in the all-too-frequent recourse the Christians had to civil authorities to settle ecclesiastical and theological disputes.³⁹² Thus, the Indian civil courts have often been called upon to decide such matters as the validity of episcopal consecration, the jurisdiction of the patriarchs and that of the Indian metropolitan, and the autonomy of the "Indian See of St. Thomas".³⁹³ •

(c) Colonialist proselytism

As is well known, the Portuguese enterprise in the East was both commercially and religiously motivated. The effort to propagate Christianity was thus dialectically bound up with the interest of expanding Portuguese power. This is true both of the Portuguese missionary enterprise and of the gradual unification of the Malabar Syrians with Rome. Here, both legitimate and illegitimate means—religious instruction, persuasion, prevention of Chaldean prelates from reaching Malabar, deporting them to Goa and Lisbon and subjecting them to the Inquisition etc.—were used. The Portuguese authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, wanted not only to bring the Syrians under Rome, but also to Latinize them and subject them to the Padroado jurisdiction against their will. Besides religious motives, commercial and military considerations seem to have played a role here. The Syrian Chris-

tians were prominent in the cultivation of pepper and the pepper trade and could provide armed men in an emergency. It was therefore natural that the Portuguese should want to make them better and fuller Christians even if it meant the use of physical force. In 1599, referring to the Synod of Diamper, Nicola Pimenta wrote: "How important is the step and how much it is in the future to promote the interests of the Portuguese Crown, none can gainsay who is aware of the effect of binding to the cause of Portugal, and bringing under the obedience of the Roman See, this race which from the days of St. Thomas has alone in India held the faith and can place in array thirty thousand armed men." ³⁹⁴

The interplay of commercial and political interests is equally or more evident in the Christianization of the Portuguese possessions in India. Already in 1512, Alfonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese Viceroy in India, wrote to his sovereign that the Brahmins and *Naiquebares* (nobles) who became Christians "serve Your Highness loyally and well in this metropolis of Goa". ³⁹⁵ Knowing fully that Portugal with a population of less than two million could not man an extensive maritime empire in the East, and aware of the liking the Goan women were beginning to have for the Portuguese, Albuquerque conceived his "great plan of rearing a population of half-breeds by encouraging some of his men to marry these women, after converting them to Christianity, and settle in the country permanently". ³⁹⁶ Some of these women were Moslems, who could be bought at the slave market, and others Hindu girls, whom Albuquerque took away from their parents. Hundreds of Portuguese availed themselves of this opportunity. As Moraes has observed, the progeny of these marriages served the purpose in view: "The children on reaching manhood joined the Portuguese army and distinguished themselves in wars of the Governors and Viceroys...." ³⁹⁷ In the long wrangles between the Portuguese Padroado and the Propaganda about the rights of evangelization and the setting up of hierarchies, these Christians were on the whole on the side of the Padroado. ³⁹⁸ In fact, the support, at times exaggerated and questionable, which the Portuguese gave to the Catholic missions became a liability later on, when the Portuguese power in India declined and Portugal found it difficult to supply the personnel

and fulfil the financial obligations the Padroado entailed.³⁹⁹ But Portugal still refused to admit this and limit her claims. The colonial powers that followed the Portuguese, especially the Dutch and the English, were on the whole not interested in mission work. Although the non-Portuguese missions, both Protestant and Catholic, were, not so tied to the colonial powers, they too made use of their Western connection to further the cause of evangelization.

Even now, most Indian Churches look to the West for financial support. Some of the Syrian Churches of Kerala, which were self-supporting before the Portuguese period, think today in terms of financial assistance from the West. What forces them to do this is perhaps their desire to set up as many institutions as possible, charitable, or of other kinds. To what extent the financial dependence of the Indian Churches on the West influences their thinking and policies in missionary work, anti-communism or family planning (as far as the Catholic Church is concerned) remains yet to be studied. It is obvious that Indian Christians cannot think and plan on their own without taking into account the attitudes and policies of the Western Churches on which they depend.

IV. Images of Christianity

It is difficult to understand the history of the Church without considering how Christianity is dialectically related to the life situation, in which it finds itself, and the interests and aspirations of the people who belong to it. For a proper realization of what Indian Christianity has been, and what it can or should be, it is necessary to reflect not only on the various circumstances and interests that influenced its origin and development, but also on the different views which the evangelizers and the Indian Christians had of Christianity and the Church.

(a) Universalism or particularism ?

What was striking about the forms of Western Christianity that came to India since the 16th century was the belief in the universal brotherhood of man. All men were considered the children of God and the brothers of Christ. This view contrasted

favourably not only with the attitudes of traditional Hinduism, but that of the Eastern Christianity in India. Hinduism, holds man to be one not only with other men but also with all reality and is thus more universal than Christianity, but its universalism is not realized when it is a question of man here and now. In its effort to attain and preserve a respectable social status, Malabar Christianity with its cultic emphasis—probably derived from its Syrian origin—accepted to such an extent the social attitude of its Hindu environment that almost lost sight of the universalism characteristic of Christianity. In fact Christianity's impact on India whether liberating or alienating, has been determined not only by the strength or weakness of its members, but also by whether their understanding of Christianity was universalistic or particularistic.

(b) Absolutism or relativism?

The belief that all are called to salvation naturally goes with the desire to share the means of salvation with others. Now in the Christian tradition, both the salvation and the means to it are unique. This uniqueness naturally engenders absolutism. The belief that all outside the Christian fold would perish impelled many like Francis Xavier to bring non-believers into the faith at any cost. Any means was used without much attention to the justifiability. It is a fact that almost all the missionaries made use of colonial support. But it cannot be said that all of them acted out of personal interest or were unaware of the injustice and exploitation that colonialism brought with it. Few protested against the evils of colonialism and many made the best of the support of the colonial powers in order to further the conversion of souls because of the conviction that Christianity was absolutely necessary for salvation. This conviction accounts for the "merciful rigour" which the Portuguese applied in Goa, demolishing temples and forcing Hindus to embrace Christianity.⁴⁰⁰ Christianity meant, for the different denominations only or primarily the particular type they represented. For the Portuguese this was Roman Catholicism, and it is not surprising that they spared no pains, using persuasion or force, to unite the Malabar Syrians with Rome.⁴⁰¹ That the union was desirable both commercially and politically was all the more reason why it was to be accomplished.

The way Syrian Catholic writers of Malabar today try to establish that "the Thomas Christians in spite of having had books containing heresy, professed not heresy *in bona* or *mala fide*, but the catholic Roman faith"⁴⁰² show how they have come to share the same absolutist view of the Church and of orthodoxy, which was, to a great extent, responsible for the unjust treatment of their forefathers by the Portuguese. Interested as they are in defending the "orthodoxy" of their community, these authors seem to take Nestorianism for something criminal, just as the missionaries considered Nestorians "perfidious heretics", and thus would like to absolve their forefathers of it.⁴⁰³ Interestingly enough these authors pay little attention to the fact that even traditional Catholic theology is now beginning to accept the orthodoxy of Nestorius.⁴⁰⁴ Modern research has shown that the condemnation of Nestorius was by and large the outcome of the Church politics of the time, which the crafty Cyril of Alexandria successfully manipulated.⁴⁰⁵

If all Christians did not act out their dogmatic beliefs to the full, it was partly because circumstances did not permit it. Belief in the absolute necessity of both Christ and Christianity, as well as in the need to supplant all non-Christian religions, was almost universally accepted till recent times. Even now the claim that Christianity is unique is made, though in a qualified manner.

(c) Institution or community?

Connected with this view of Christianity as *the* unique way of salvation is the institutionalistic conception of it. Christianity is understood primarily as an institution that mediates salvation through its doctrines and practices, magically as it were. This mechanical view was at work in the forced conversion of captives by the Portuguese, and in the opposition of the Portuguese missionaries to the beliefs and practices of the Malabar Syrians which differed from those of Rome. The reason for the missionaries wanting to convert them and make their beliefs and practices conform to those of Rome was their connecting salvation necessarily with certain dogmas and practices. According to them these were meant to effect salvation *ex opere operato* and not so much to reveal and realize for man, symbolically, the meaning of

life, helping him to reach communion with the world and God. It would seem that the same mechanical conception of Christian beliefs and practices underlies the otherwise laudable and open approach of Robert de Nobili in Madurai. It was to bring the Indians to salvation that he accommodated himself to the ways of high caste Hindus, including their exclusivism. It may be asked if by doing this De Nobili did not compromise Christian universalism, which could have had an immediate emancipatory impact on society. Although not so tied to the rites and sacraments as Catholics, the uncritical attitude of many Protestants to the Bible as the Word of God seems to betray the same mechanical view of salvation.

In the institutionalistic view of Christianity, those assigned to preach the word and administer the sacraments have a unique role to play. This role is not only functional – a service rendered to the community – but also constitutive of the Church. In this view, shared by all episcopal Churches, the Church is essentially hierarchical. The importance the hierarchical view of the Church gives to historical episcopacy and apostolic succession seems to have been a determining factor in the history of Malabar Christianity. Neither the undue dependence of pre-Portuguese Malabar on Seleucia nor the Jacobite connection that came in the wake of the Coonan Cross Oath can be understood without this “episcopalian” view of the Church. It is the belief that episcopacy could be conferred only by a bishop and not by priests that weakened the position of the archdeacon consecrated after the Coonan Cross revolt.⁴⁰⁶ It would seem that some of the Antiochian Prelates brought to confer episcopal consecration made capital out of this view of the Church.⁴⁰⁷ Some of the factional fights in the Jacobite community have been, partly at least, heightened by ill-advised conferment of episcopacy, for example, the consecration of Kattumangattu Ramban as Mar Cyril in 1772, and Deacon Mathew Palakunnath as Metropolitan Mathew Mar Athenasius in 1842.⁴⁰⁸ Had these Christians held a different conception of the Church, and viewed episcopal consecration as a sacramental action installing one chosen to serve the community, and not as a mechanical transference of the power and right to govern the Church, the history of the Malabar Syrian Churches would have been markedly different.

The institutionalistic approach to the Church and the problems it creates can be solved only by a community approach, which sees the Church as a community of believers, the emphasis being on personal belief and the individual's understanding and interpretation of the Bible and his experience. As a matter of fact, there is an unsolved tension between institution and community in the Church everywhere.⁴⁰⁹ This is heightened in the Churches where historical episcopacy is a constitutive factor. The freedom and initiative of Christians in thought and action are often in conflict with the binding power of the hierarchy. Moreover, sections of the Indian Churches still betray a predominantly institutionalistic or hierarchical view of the Church. There is a tendency to measure the well-being of a community in terms of its having bishops and other Church dignitaries from its midst.⁴¹⁰ In view of the fact that communities like those of the Malabar Christians had to live for centuries without their own bishops, it is natural that they should desire to have their own bishops. However, they have developed, in the process, a hierarchy-centred picture of the Church, forgetting that Church leadership is there for the service of the community, and not as an end in itself. No amount of structural perfection can make Christianity what it ought to be: a liberating rather than an alienating force.

(d) An end in itself ?

In all human enterprises there is a tendency for the initial purpose to be forgotten. Conscious of comprising God's chosen people, the Church has had, from the beginning, a tendency to concentrate on self-preservation and self-glorification.⁴¹¹ Identifying herself with Christ's body and God's Kingdom on earth, she forgets her temporary, *ad hoc* character. She has been called to serve the world rather than be served by it. In the context of a caste-ridden society, the Church seems to be, for many Indian Christians, a community with its own rights and privileges, to be defended at all costs.⁴¹² This mentality is evident in the use which many Christian leaders make of certain fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution to the minorities, without considering whether a reform, say in the field of education, is necessary for the common good, even if it means certain disadvantages for the Christian community. The fact that

Christians are a minority in India engenders in them a certain fear complex and defensive mentality. Christianity can be of real service to India's people only to the extent that it succeeds in overcoming this.

LOOKING AHEAD

A review and evaluation of a living reality like Indian Christianity would be incomplete without some indication of the direction it may take in the future. What follows are a few remarks on what is possible and what is desirable if Christianity is to help rather than hinder India's growth and fulfilment.

The winds of change blowing through the Indian Churches today are in many ways full of promise. Never before have the relations between Christian Churches been so friendly and co-operative as now. The ecumenical spirit is widened to include other religions as well. Christians are discovering the riches of the cultural and religious heritage of their country, and feel that they should not feed themselves any more on an alien diet as in the past. There is also an increasing realization of the liberating role the Church should play in the context of such enslaving and alienating factors as poverty, ignorance and exploitation.

There are also forces of reaction, to be sure, that try to keep the Church where it is, or move it in the direction of the past rather than of the future, and these are no less strong than the forces of change. We need only recall the continued existence of communalism among Christians, the resurgence of the factional fights in some of the Churches and the reactionary tendencies in others that want to hold on to the rigid, self-righteous Counter-Reformation theology, and decry everything new as heresy and modernism, or desire a return to pristine Oriental traditions in liturgy and Church government, without considering their alien, antiquated and alienating features. But it is unlikely that the future will belong to the forces of rigid conservatism, though these may hold up the onward movement and allow changes only when it is too late.

Equally important are the ambiguities of the reform movements and the half-baked measures adopted to realize them. It would seem that some would want to eat their cake and have it. They would affirm dogmatically the absolute uniqueness of Christ and Christianity and at the same time acknowledge the salvific value of the non-Christian religions. Some are as uncritical of Indian traditions as they have been of Western and Syrian ones. This kind of Indianization is nothing but an exchange of loyalties from one tradition to another. It needs to be asked how deep-going the convictions regarding Indianization are. Would they survive even under a regime that renounces India's religious traditions, as happened with Confucianism in China? Or is this Indianization a conformism to the nationalist sentiments of the time for the sake of survival? Little thought seems to have been given to the dangers of nationalism, and the need to transcend geographical and political boundaries, without sacrificing solidarity with next-door neighbours, especially if they are suffering and oppressed. Again, reform of practices is advocated without calling in question their theoretical presuppositions and justifications. Harmonization of beliefs and doctrines is attempted without consideration of their underlying life-situation and interests, which may be alienating and so in need of uncovering and criticism.

Of course, no course of action is altogether unambiguous. The purpose of pointing out the ambiguities of what are the more promising trends in the present-day Indian Churches is not to denigrate them. The concern is, rather, that a realization of the risks involved may help to prevent mistakes. Theoretically, what is necessary is to assess critically what Christian Churches should mean for those within them and those outside, taking into account the positive and negative aspects of the Christian theory and praxis and what can be learnt from other traditions, especially Indian ones, both religious and secular. Cliches such as 'Indianization', 'inculturation', 'Indian theology', 'Indian liturgy', do not seem to express the main religious or theological task facing Christianity in India today. They betray a synecdochic syndrome; for they focus on one aspect of the task as if it were the whole or the most important thing. In practice the Christian Churches should, in accordance with their deepened

and critical self-understanding, make an earnest effort to realize their professed ideal of man's liberation and reconciliation. For this purpose, the Churches themselves will have to be really *free*, first of all, with regard to their own past and present dependences: the ties that bind them to Christian or Indian religious traditions should be those of continuity with what proves to be good, true and relevant. The ties that bind them to the Churches of the West, on which Indian Christianity is still dependent theologically and economically, should be those of Christian solidarity rather than of submission. Secondly, the Churches will have to think again about their own organizations, and reform them so that *all* will have a chance of being active rather than passive. Thirdly, the Churches should play a more active role in the social, cultural and economic liberation of the underprivileged, attending as much to the enslaving and oppressive structures as to their effects. The aim should not be, in this regard, to increase the number of Christians. It will be necessary to examine whether some of the traditional Christian activities serve to liberate and integrate or to perpetuate restrictive and divisive structures and mechanisms. Fourthly, if the mission of the Church is to serve the people and not seek her own profit, her institutional interests will have to be pushed to the background in order that a clear and bold stand may be taken against injustice, from whatever source it may come. Without the will to lose and to suffer, no prophetic ministry is possible. A sign of Christian integrity would, therefore, be the will to lose, and losing life is the genuinely Christian way of gaining it. What Christianity will be in India tomorrow, and what contribution it can make to the people of India, will depend on whether we have learnt to be really free, free even to lose ourselves in love.

Rheinstrasse 2
66 Saarbrücken 2

John Arakkal
M. V, Cyriac
Abraham Koothottil

Footnotes

1. Cf. E. Tisserant, "Syro-Malabare (Eglise)" (Hereafter SME), DTC, XIV, 3091 f.; P. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, London, 1970, 63 f.

2. *Topographia Christiana*, PG, LXXXVIII, 169. 445.

Cf. also E. Tisserant, "Nestorienne (L'Eglise)" (Hereafter EN), DTC, XI, 196 f.

3. Cf. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Cila Kērala Caritra Praśnannal* (Hereafter Elamkulam CKCP). Kottayam, 1963, 115-132 (Text and interpretation); M. V. Cheriyan, *A History of Christianity in Kerala*, Kottayam, 1973, between 88-89 (photographic reproduction of the plates). Cf. also E. Tisserant, EN, 198.

4. Cf. Elamkulam, CKCP, 115-117.

5. Cf. E. Tisserant, EN, 198; G. M. Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India*, Bombay, 1964, 77 f.

6. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 84-105.

7. Cf. *ibid.*, 91.

8. Cf. F. E. Keay, *A History of the Syrian Church in India*, Delhi, 1960, cited by C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *The Indian Churches of St. Thomas*, Delhi, 1967, 24.

9. There are several versions of the work in modern languages. Cf. W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, II, London, 1871; M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1955; A. F. J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas*, Leiden, 1962; G. Bornkamm, "Thomasakten", Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, II, Tübingen, 1964, 297-372.

10. Cf. *Acts of Thomas*, no. 1.

11. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 1-2.

12. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 2.

13. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 31, 39.

14. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 3-4.

15. Cf. *ibid.*, *passim*.

16. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 27.

17. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 66.

18. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 14, 51, 88, 98, 135.

19. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 118-170.

20. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 164-169.

21. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 169.

22. Cf. G. Bornkamm, *loc. cit.*, 298-308; A. Dihle, "Neuss zur Thomas Tradition", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, VI, 1963, 54-70.

23. These include A. E. Medleycott, P. Dahlmann and J. N. Farquhar.

24. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 22-25. However, this dating has been challenged by Van Lohuizen-De Leeuw, *The "Scythian"*

Period, Leiden, 1949. The author assigns Gondophernes' reign to 30-10 B. C. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 23.

25. Thomas is the Greek form of the Aramaic 'taumā', meaning twin. 'Didymos' in Greek means also twin. Cf. "Tomas", H. Haag, ed., *Bible-Lexikon*, Einsiedeln, 1968. Cf. also W. Bauer, *Das Apostelbild in der altchristlichen Überlieferung*, [Hennecks-Schneemeleher, *op. cit.*, 30.

26. Cf. *Clement, hom.*, II, P. G., II, 77.

27. Cf. *Chrono. pasch.*, IX. PG, XCII, 1076.

28. Cf. *In Gen.*, PG, XII, 92.

29. Cf. *Hist. Eccl.*, PL, XXI, 478, 513.

30. Cf. *Hist. Ecc.*, I, 19; IV, 18, PG, LXVII, 125, 50+.

31. Cf. G. Bornkamm, *loc. cit.*, 298 f.; W. Bauer, *art. cit.*, 30;

A. Dihle, *art. cit.*, 56 f.

32. Cf. *Carmina Nisibena*, no. 42, ed. G. Bickell, Leipzig, 1866, 79.

33. Cf. *Hom. XXXIII*, PG, XXXVI, 227.

34. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps XLV*, 21, PL, XIV, 1143.

35. Cf. *Epist. LIX ad Marcellam*, PL, XXII, 589.

36. Cf. *De glor. beat. martyr.*, PL, LXXI, 733.

37. Incidentally, Rufinus and Socrates assign India to Bartholomew. Cf. PL, XXI, 478; PG, LXVII, 125.

There is also a tradition that Pantaenus of Alexandria visited the Indian Christians towards the close of the second century and took away with him a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, V, 10, PG, XX, 456.

Now, these traditions are similar to the Thomas traditions and have little historical value, though there are authors who treat them as historical. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 45-45. Cf. also A. C. Perumalil, *The Apostles of India*, Patna, 1952.

38. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venezian*, II, London, 1903, 290.

39. Cf. G. Schurhammer *Franz Xaver, sein Leben und seine Zeit*, II, Freiburg, 1963, 560 f; A. M. Mundadan, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, 1970 (Hereafter SCT), 28, 82.

40. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 50

41. Cf. *ibid.*

42. Cf. PL, LXXXIII, 152.

43. Cf. footnotes 36.

44. Cf. footnote 32.

45. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 48, 83.

46. We may quote here the description which two "eye witnesses" gave of the remains found in the tomb: "Allguns osos da cabeça e depois das costas a de todo o corpo (Diogo Fernandes); "ossos de caveira, e de pernas e de braços. e d'outras partes do corpo" (Gaspar Correa), cited by Schurhammer, *op. cit.*, II, 566. Cf. also *ibid.*, 567.

47. Cf. "P. Gaspar Barzaeus S. I. Indiae Viceprovincialis P. Ignatio de Loyola, Romam, Gor 12 Januarii 1953" I wicki, ed., *Documenta Indica*, (13 vols., Rome. 1948-75), II, 583 f. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 83.

48. Cf. footnote 32. The merchant's name is Khabin according to the *Chaldean Martyrology* and Habban according to Solomon, Bishop of Bassorah (c. 1222). Cf. A. E. Medlycott, "The Witness of Ephrem and Others", reprinted in G. Menachery, ed., *The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India*, II, Trichur, 1973, 22. Incidentally, we may point out that the contribution of this Encyclopaedia to the study of history is rather limited. For it is a poorly planned and badly edited compendium of articles, many of which have already appeared elsewhere and have little value as pieces of historical research.

49. Cf. footnote 36.

50. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 83 f. Cf. also *Acts of Thomas*, no. 170. According to the *Acts*, when the grave was opened by king Mazdai, the bones of the Apostle were not there as they had been secretly transported to the West.

51. Cf. Clement of Alexandria *Strom.* IV, 9, PG. VIII, 1281.

52. Cf. A. Dihle, *art. cit.*, 57.

53. Cf. G. Schurhammer, "Foreward", A. M. Mundadan, SCT, viii.

54. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 82.

55. Cf. G. Schurhammer, *op. cit.*, II, 570-579; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 50-59.

56. Cf. G. Schurhammer, *op. cit.*, II, 578 f.

57. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 18-22; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 31-42; M. O. Joseph, *Kerala Kristiānikal*, Cochin, 1972, 47-61.

58. Cf. P. J. Thomas, *Malayāla Sāhityavum Kristiānikalum*, Kottayam, 1960, 61 ff. The text of the Rambān Pāṭṭu was first published by Bernard Thoma, *Mār Tōmmā Kristiānikal*, I, Palai, 1913, 61-79. F. X. Rocca has published a translation of the song: La Leggenda di S. Thommaso apostolo," *Orientalia Periodica*, XXII, 1963, 168-179.

59. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 61. Cf. M. O. Joseph, *op. cit.*, 48.

60. This has been noted by A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 44 f.

61. Cf. *Acts of Thomas*, nos. 2-4.

62. Cf. *ibid.*, nos 17-23.

63. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 4.

64. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 9-15, 98, 117, 135-137.

65. Cf. *ibid.*, nos. 6, 8.

66. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 169.

67. Cf. *ibid.*, no. 168.

68. Cf. W. N. Schumacher, "Frühchristliche Kunst, A. Kirchenbau", ²LThK, IV, 430; G. Kretschmar, "Geschichte der christlichen Gottesdienstes, V. A. Der Osten", ³RGG, II, 1765.

69. Cf. A. Adam, "Bischof, I. Kirchengeschichtlich", ³RGG, I, 1301 f; B. Lohse, "Priester, III. In der Christlichen Kirche", ³RGG, V, 578 f. Cf. also H. Küng, *Die Kirche*, Freiburg 1967, 465-487.

70. Cf. "P. Antonius Monserrate S. I. P. E. Mercuriano, Praep. Gen. S. I, Cocino 12 Ianuarii 1579" (Hereafter A. Monserrate), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, XI, 518; "Mar Abraham, Archiepiscopus, P. E. Mercuriano, praep. Gen. S. I., Cocino 15 Ianuarii 1580" (Hereafter Mar Abraham b), *ibid.*, 827.

71. Cf. *Rambān Song*, lines 295-306; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 83, 85; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 130; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 31-41.

72. A. D. Barnett, "The Early History of Southern India", *The Cambridge History of India*, I, Delhi, 1962, 540.

73. Cf. Elamkulam, CKCP, 296 f; *idem*, *Kērala Caritratttilē Iruladañña Edukal* (Hereafter KCIE), Kottayam, ⁴1970, 192-196; A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kērala Caritram* Kottayam, ³1973, 111, 132.

74. Cf. Elamkulam, KCIE, 194; *idem*, *Samskāratintē Nālikakallukal* (Hereafter SN). Kottayam, ³1973, 9-24; A. Sreedhara Menon, *op. cit.*, 111.

75. Cf. Elamkulam, KCIE, 192-206; *idem*, CKCP, 282, 295-297; *idem*, *Kēralabhāṣayude Vikāsapariṇamannal*, 129-133; A. Sreedhara Menon, *op. cit.*, 129-133.

76. Paradoxically enough, some of the Syrian authors who affirm the high caste and apostolic origin of their community do not hesitate to admit at the same time that there was no rigid caste system in the first-century Malabar society. Cf. M. O. Joseph, *op. cit.*, 68, 73; J. Thoomkuzhi, "Kēralam Mārttōmmāyude Kālattu", Hormice, ed., *Kristumatavum Bhāratavum*, Alleppey, 1972, 331.

77. L. D. Barnett, *art. cit.*, 540; Elamkulam, SN, 89, 91-101; A. Sreedhara Menon, *op. cit.*, 120-127.

78. Cf. Elamkulam, SN, 89, 93 f.; A. Sreedhara Menon, *op. cit.*, 120-124.

79. Cf. P. Podipara *op. cit.*, 20: "The tenacity with which these Family traditions about the South Indian apostolate of St. Thomas have been held and the fact that they existed before the coming of the Portuguese, make it difficult to discredit them completely." Cf. also *ibid.*, 18 f.

80. Cf. M. O. Joseph, *op. cit.*, 47-48. Cf. also P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 28.

81. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 82

82. *Ibid.*, 81. Cf. also M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.* 53.

83. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 11.

84. Cf. *ibid.*, 97-100

85. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3093. Cf. also J. F. Raulin, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana synodo*, Rome, 1745, 8, 434.

86. Today there are Southists who admit the Northists' claim that they descend from the converts of St. Thomas. Cf. Thomas. E. P. Mathew, "The Knanaya Community of Kerala", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 74; J. Stephen, "Malankara Syrian Knanaya Christian Community", *ibid.*, 87.

87. Cf. A. Monserrate, 512; Cf. also "P. Alphonsus Pacheco S. I. P. E. Mercuriano, Praep. Gen. S. I., Goa Novembris? 1577" (Hereafter A. Pacheco), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, X, 967-969.

88. Cf. A. Monserrate, 512 f.

89. Cf. *ibid.*, 513.

90. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3092 f.; G. M. Moraes *op. cit.*, 61-63.

91. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 20.

92. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 108 f.

93. Cf. *ibid.*, 100 f.

94. Cf. A. Monserrate, 514; "Relatio P. Francisci Dionysii S. I. de Christianis S. Thomae, Cocini 4 Januarri 1578" (Hereafter F. Dionysio), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, XI, 137 f. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 105-108.

95. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 92.

96. It is, however, difficult to date the event. The traditional date, 345 A. D., is no doubt a later conjecture. Modern authors would assign the Syrian immigration a much later date, i.e., the 8th (Visscher, Hough) or the 9th (Dionysio, Assemani, Raulin) century. Cf. F. Dionysio, 137; J. F. Raulin, *op. cit.*, 434; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 17 f.

97. Cf. M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 80; G. Schurhammer, *The Malabar Church and Rome during the Early Portuguese Period and Before*, Trichinopoly, 1934, no. 69, cited by A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 131 f.

98. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 61-63; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 80-82; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 131-136.

99. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 91-96; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 105-112.

100. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 111.

101. Cf. *Synod of Diamper* (Hereafter *Diamper*), session 8, decree 18.

102. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 83, 99. The author says that he "knows old people who in their younger days did this service to the Hindu neighbours."

103. Cf. Elamkulam, KCIE, 46-48; *idem*, CKCP, 223; A. Sreedhara Menon, *op. cit.*, 129-133.

104. Cf. Elamkulam, CKCP, 213-215.

105. Cf. *ibid.*, 270 f., 279.

106. Cf. Elamkulam, KCIE, 193-195, 199 f.; A. Sreedhara Menon, *op. cit.*, 130 f.

107. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 175. Cf. F. Dionysio, 132 f.; A. Monserrate, 513; A. Pacheco, 968; "P. A. Valignanus S. I.,

Visitator, P. Everardo Mercuriano, Praep. Gen. S. I., Goa 16 Septembris 1577" (Hereafter A. Valignano), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, X, 881. Valignano gives the number of the Syrian Christians of Malabar as 100,000, Dionysio as 80,000, Monserrate and Pacheco as 70,000.

108. Cf. A. Monserrate, 513; F. Dionysio, 137; *Diamper*, session 9, decree 2. Cf. also P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 83.

109. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 134; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 151. For details on the status of the temple prostitutes in Malabar, see Elamkulam, KCIE, 75-90; *idem*, *Unnunīli Sandēṣam*, Kottayam, 1970, 13.

110. Cf. M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.* 149; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 175.

111. Cf. A. Monserrate, 515; Pacheco, 976. Cf. also G. M. Moraes *op. cit.*, 177 f.

112. Cited by A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 120.

113. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 177; Gouvea cited by A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 121 f.

114. Cf. A. Monserrate, 515 f.; F. Pacheco, 969. Cf. also G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 178 f.

115. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3097; *idem*, EN, 195-199. Cf. also "Relatio de Itinere P. Melchioris Carneiro S. I. ad Christianos S. Thomae, Goa ca. Finem Anni 1557" (Hereafter M. Carneiro), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, III, 805; "P. Melchior Nunes Barreto S. I. Patri Generali, Romam, Cocino 15 Ianuarii 1559" (Hereafter M. N. Barreto Patri Generali), *ibid.*, IV, 230; A. Valignano, 881 f.

116. Cf. E. Tisserant, EN, 197-199; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 64-66.

117. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3094; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 67 ff.; A. M. Mundadan, *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians under Mar Jacob 1498-1552* (Hereafter API), Bangalore, 1967, 24-26.

118. Cf. E. Tisserant, EN, 173-178; J. Assfalg, "Seleukeia in Babylonien", ²LThK, IX, 632; B. Spuler, "Seleukeia-Ktesiphon", ³RGG, V, 1685.

119. Cf. M. Carneiro, 805; M. N. Barreto Patri Generali, 230-232; F. Dionysio, 137-139; A. Monserrate, 516 f. Cf. also E. Tisserant, EN, 228-230.

120. Cf. M. N. Barreto Patri Generali, 230-232; F. Dionysio, 137; A. Monserrate, 516. Cf. also E. Tisserant, EN, 228-230.

121. Cf. "Mar Abraham Archiepiscopus Christianorum S. Thomae, P. E. Mercuriano, Praep. Gen. S. I., Cocino 2 Ianuarii 1578" (Hereafter Mar Abraham a), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, XI, 128; "Rev. Georgius de Christo, Archidiaconus Christianorum S. Thomae, P. E. Mercuriano, Praep. Generali S. I., Cocino 3 Ianuarii 1578", *ibid.*, 130; A. Monserrate, 521, 524-27.

122. Cf. footnote 119. Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, *passim*. E. R. Hambye's authorized adaptation of this article in *Eastern Christianity in India*, London, 1957 is not reliable on this point. For he either suppresses or consistently renders Tisserant's *Nestorien* as *Chaldean*, *Syrian* or 'Nestorian'. Compare Tisserant 3099 ("communaute nestorienne du Malabar"), 3100 "Nestoriens de Quilon"), 3112, 3115 with Hambye 20-30 ("the Syrian community of Malabar"), 32 "the Syrians of Quilon"), 33, 59 f., 67. Tisserant's "Ils trouvaient, en effet, une chrétienté hérétique, formellement ou matériellement, peu importe" (3115) becomes in Hambye "Actually confronted with a community which they thought to be heretical one, though whether formally or materially is a distinction of no importance here" (67).

123. Cf. F. Dionysio, 137 f.; A Pacheco, 975. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, API, 27, 55. f.

124. Cf. F. Dionysio, 140. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 141 f.

125. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT 141 f.

126. Cf. A. Pacheco, 975; M. Carneiro, 811; F. Dionysio, 140

127. Cf. F. Dionysio, 140; A Pacheco, 975.

129. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 138. Cf. 138. Cf. also M. Carneiro, 804, 809; A Valignano, 882.

130. Cf. F. Dionysio, 140. Cf. Also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 152.

131. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 145 f.

132. Cf. F. Dioysio, 139; M. Carneiro, 806; A, Monserrate, 518; A. Pacheco, 971; *Diamper*, session 7, decree 18.

133. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT 154 f.

134. Cf. *Diamper*, session 3, decess 3, 15.

135. Cf. *ibid.*, session 3, decrees, 13, 15.

136. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 81: "It was Hindu teacher that taught the present writer the three R's and the Christian Catechism."

137. Cf. "P. M. Nunes Barreto S. I. Sociis Europaeis, Cocino 31 Decembris 1561", I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, V, 416.

138. Cf. *Diamper*, session 3, decrees 13, 15; G. M. Moraes *op. cit.*, 193.

139. Cf. M. Carneiro, 804; A. Monserrate, 517; A. Pacheco, 971; *Diamper*, session 3, decree 6.

140. Cf. *Diamper*, session 3, decrees 14-15.

141. Cf. *ibid.*

142. Cf. *ibid.*

143. Cf. *ibid.*, session 5, decree 1. Cf. also *ibid.*, session 4, decree 16.

144. Cf. *Ibid.*, session 3, decree 9. Cf. also *ibid.*, decree 15.

145. *Ibid.*, session 5, decree 1.

146. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 113.

147. Cf. *Diamper*, session 3, decree 14.

148. Cf. Mar Abraham b, 827; A. Monserrate, 518; *Diamper*, session 4, decree 1. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 172.
149. Cf. Mar Abraham b, 827; A. Monserrate, 518. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT 172 f.
150. Cf. M. Carneiro, 805; Mar Abraham b, 827; A. Monserrate, 518; *Diamper*, session 6, decree 1. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 172 f.
151. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT 175.
152. Cf. F. Dionysio, 140. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 165.
153. Cf. M. Carneiro, 805; "P. M. Nunes Barreto S. I. Sociis Europaeis", 417. Cf. also G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 197 f.
154. Cf. A. Monserrate, 517; A. Pacheco, 970.
155. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 166.
156. Cf. M. Carneiro, 805; A. Pacheco, 970. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan SCT, 167.
157. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 197 f.; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 157.
158. Cf. "P. M. Nunes Barreto S. I. Sociis Europaeis", 316.,
159. Cf. A. Pacheco, 974 f. Cf. also A. Cherukarakunnel, "Indianization among the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 175.
160. Cf. *Diamper*, session 4, decree 16.
161. Cf. A. Monserrate, 518; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 200-202; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 158.
162. Cf. A. Pacheco, 969; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 159.
163. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 89-91; A. M. Mundadan SCT, 174-176. Cf. also A. Pacheco, 976.
164. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 204-207; E. Tisserant, SME, 3098-3100.
165. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 204-207; A. M. Mundadan, API, 62-67.
166. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 204 ff.
167. Cf. *ibid.*, 214 f.
168. Cf. *ibid.*, 214; A. M. Mundadan API, 62-67.
169. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.* 222-228; E. Tisserant, SME, 3097-3101.
170. Cf. M. Carneiro, 808; "P. M. Nunes Barreto S. I., Viceprov., Patri I. Miron S. I., Cocino 20 Ianuarii 1566" (Hereafter M. N. Barreto Patri Miron), I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, VI, 699; "D. Sebastianus, Rex Lusitaniae, D. Francisco Coutinho," *ibid.*, 12; P. I. Lainez S. I. P. Melchiori Nunes Barreto S. I., Tridento 10 Decembris 1562", *ibid.*, V, 655; A. Monserrate, 523, 525. Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, 3097-3101.
171. Cf. Tisserant, SME, 3097 ff.; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 120 f.
172. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3097 ff.
173. Cf. footnote 170.

174. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 222-228; E. Tisserant, SME,
175. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 228. [3101 ff.]
176. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, API, 98. f.
177. Cf. *ibid.* 105 f., 108, 112 f.
178. Cf. *ibid.*, 144-147.
179. Cf. *ibid.*, 128-142.
180. Cf. M. Carneiro, 804-806, 808, 810 f.; M. N. Barreto Patri Generali, 230 f.; M. N. Barreto Patri Miron, 699; A. Monserrate, 523-525. Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, 3102, 3115; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 222-228.
181. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3101.
182. Cf. *ibid.*
183. Cf. *ibid.*, 3102.
184. Cf. *ibid.*, 3103 f.
185. Cf. *ibid.*, 3103.
186. Cf. "Ignatii XVII Niemat Allāh, Patriarchae Antiocheni, Relatio de Nestorianis", I. Wicki. *op. cit.*, XI. 868; M. N. Barreto Patri Generali, 230-233. Cf. also P. Podipara *op. cit.*, 127-130.
187. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3103-3105.
188. Cf. *ibid.*
189. Cf. "Litterae annuae Malabaricae", I. Wicki, *op. cit.*, XIII, 498. Cf. also P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 131.
190. Cf. Mar Abraham a, 128; "Georgius de Christo. Archidiaconus, Christianorum St. Thomae, P. Mercuriano. Praep. Generali S. I., Cocino 3 Ianuarii 1578", 130; A. Monserrate, 520-526. Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, 3105.
191. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3106 f.
192. Cf. *ibid.*, 3107.
193. Cf. *ibid.*, 3107 f. Cf. also J. F. Raulin, *op. cit.*, d2-d3.
194. Cf. J. F. Raulin, *op. cit.*, 19-39; E. Tisserant, SME, 3107-3111; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 12-43.
195. Cf. J. F. Raulin, *op. cit.*, 40.
196. Cf. *ibid.*, 39-52; E. Tisserant, SME, 3111-3114; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 43-49.
197. Cf. *Diamper*, session 2, decrees 1, 16; session 3, decree 6, 8-9, 14-15, 20.
198. Cf. *ibid.*, session 3, decrees 1, 21.
199. Cf. *ibid.*, session 2, decrees 1, 17.
200. Cf. *ibid.*, session 9, decrees 1, 6-9.
201. Cf. *ibid.*, session 7, decrees 20-22.
202. Cf. *ibid.*, session 9, decrees 2-3.
203. Cf. *ibid.*, session 4, decrees 2, 5, 14-16; session 5, decrees 5; session 7, decrees 1-16; session 8, decrees 1-14, 17, 21, 23. Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, 3151-3157.
204. Cf. J. F. Raulin, *op. cit.*, 53-58; E. Tisserant, SME, 3114 f.; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 50-57.
205. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 50 f.

206. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3115.
 207. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 59-66; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 140 f.
 208. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 32.
 209. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 40; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 118; X. Koodapuzha, "The Faith and Communion of the Thomas Christians", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 28.
- Though there are some evaluations of Diamper from a juridical point of view - cf. J. Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, Rome, 198; G. Antão, *De synodi Diamperitanae natura atque decretis*, Goa, 1952 -, a theological appraisal of the synod is still a desideratum.
210. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 28.
 211. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 147-149.
 212. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3119 f.
 213. Cf. *ibid.* Cf. also C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 35-37.
214. Non-catholic writers of Malabar would in general maintain that the revolt was directed "against Roman Catholic (and not merely Jesuit) supremacy". "Paul Verghese, "The Syrian Orthodox Church", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 75. Cf. also D. Daniel, *The Orthodox Church of India*, New Delhi, 1972, 56. However, it would be more accurate to say, as C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas have pointed out, that "perhaps the spirited crowd as a whole did not make very subtle distinctions.", *op. cit.*, 36.
215. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 36.
- Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, 3120.
216. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 36 ff.; E. Tisserant, SME, 3120.
 217. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3120-3122; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 82-103.
 218. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3122 f.; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 103-117.
 219. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3123; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 117 f.
 220. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 119-122.
 221. Cf. *ibid.*
 222. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 165-197.
 223. Cf. *ibid.* Cf. also E. Tisserant, SME, 3125-3129.
 224. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 165-197; E. Tisserant, SME, 3124-3129.
 225. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3126 f., 3129.
 226. Cf. *ibid.*
 227. Cf. *ibid.*, 3129.
 228. Cf. *ibid.*, 3126-31-29; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 185 ff.; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 170-178, 198.
 229. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3124; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II,
 230. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 175 f. [192-213.

231. Cf. *ibid.*

232. Cf. *ibid.*, 184-196.

233. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 266-282; E. Tisserant, SME, 3131-3139.

234. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3138 f.

This small community is known as the Chaldean Syrian Church or the Church of the East, and its members are found mostly in and around Trichur. There is much truth in the claim of Mar Aprem of the Church of the East that "if any Church has any claim to the faith, liturgy, customs and tradition of the Pre-Portuguese Syrian Christianity of Malabar, it is the Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur.", "Church of the East", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 94.

235. Cf. E. Tisserant SME, 3140 f.

236. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 195-197.

237. Cf. *ibid.*, 197 f.

238. Cf. *ibid.*, 202; E. Tisserant, SME, 3142.

239. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 202 f.

240. Cf. *ibid.*, 203-205.

241. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 58; Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 167; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 156.

242. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 66; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 155 f.

243. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3144; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 38.

244. Cf. Cyril, "Introduction of the Antiochene Rite into the Malankara Church". G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 79-87. Cf. also P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 217.

245. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.* II, 175-179; Cf. also C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 41.

246. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.* II, 175-179; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 217 f.

247. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 218; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 42.

248. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 220; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 42.

249. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 92-97; D. Daniel, *op. cit.* 92-99.

250. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 92-97; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 92-99.

251. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 117 f.; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 111-113.

252. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 114-116.

253. Cf. *ibid.*, 112-120; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 224.

254. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 121-124; Paul Verghese, "The Syrian Orthodox Church", 77 f.

255. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 124 f; Paul Verghese, "The Syrian Orthodox Church", 78.

256. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 124-126; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 255 f.

257. Cf. B. Spuler, "Die Orthodoxen Kirchen", *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, LXVI, 1976, 91 f.

258. Cf. Bernard Thoma *op. cit.*, II, 173, 192-196; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 178-180, 217.

259. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 196-206; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 40.

260. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 240-242; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 72 f.

261. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 210-212; T. Inchakalody, "The Re-Union Movement", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 71-73.

262. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 118. Cf. also Paul Verghese, "The Syrian Orthodox Church", 77.

263. Cf. T. Inchakalody, *art. cit.*, 77.

264. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 44-47; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 74, 77.

265. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 45; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 74.

266. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 46-48; K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, (Sydney, 1971, 7 vols), VI, 113 f.

267. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 48-59.

268. Cf. *ibid.*, 46, 48.

269. Cf. *ibid.*, 60-64; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 83-85, 169 f. (Mavelikara Padiyola).

270. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 65; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 220.

271. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 74-87.

272. Cf. *ibid.*, 83 f.

273. Cf. *ibid.*, 88 f.

274. Cf. *ibid.*, 93, 95-99; K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 193; VII, 278 ff.

275. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 84-115; K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, II, 111, 114.

276. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 125-143; K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 249.

277. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 143-146; P. Thomas, *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*, London, 1954, 51-54.

278. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 155.

279. Cf. G. Schurhammer, *Franz Xaver*, II, passim. Cf. also P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 52-62.

280. Cf. G. Schurhammer, *Franz Xaver*, II, 281-354.

281. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 259-262.

282. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 271.

283. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 266-269; VI, 173-177.

284. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 272 f. Cf. also *ibid.*, VI, 78 ff; VII, 281 f.

285. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 253 f.; 262; VI, 83-86, 88, 90 f.; VII, 284.
286. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 93, 95; VII, 285.
287. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 84 f.; VII, 284.
288. Cf. P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 150-152.
289. Cf. *ibid.*
290. Cf. *ibid.*
291. Cf. *ibid.*, 153; K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 276-278.
292. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 78 f.; P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 153-157.
293. Cf. P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 153 ff.; K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 78 f.; H. W. Genieschen, "Indien, IV. Missions und Kirchengeschichte" ³RGG, III, 710.
294. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 280 f.
295. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 281 f.; VI, 104-108.
296. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 104-108; P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 162-167.
297. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 108, 111.
298. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 108-121.
299. Cf. *ibid.*
300. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 116-129, 146 ff.; 158-173.
301. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 119, 122 f., 133, 137-139, 142, 150, 154 f.; 159, 166, 173, 177, 181, 183 f.; 186, 192, 212.
302. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 112, 138, 212; VII, 293.
303. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 150, 166, 192, 206.
304. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 197 ff.; 201 f.; VII, 308 f., 315.
305. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 137 f., 154, 192.
306. Cf. S. C. Neill, "Einheitsbewegungen, VII. Im Bereich der Jungen Kirchen", ³RGG, II, 401.
307. Cf. *ibid.*, 401-403.
308. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 130, 200 f., VII, 303-306.
309. Cf. B. Sundkler, "Südindien, Kirche von", ³RGG, VI, 470-472; J. E. L. Newbegin, *The Reunion of the Church*, London, 1948. Cf. also K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 303-306.
310. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3161.
311. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 15-30; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 20-31, 102 f.; P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 12-26; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 2-53; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 2-17.
312. Cf. M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 2-11; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 16-18; M. O. Joseph, *op. cit.*, 45-47.
313. Cf. footnote 13.
314. Cf. footnote 19.
315. Cf. footnote 18.
316. Cf. M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 26 f.; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 46 f.
317. *op. cit.*, 19. Cf. Z. M. Paret, *Malankara Vastrāṇikal*, I, Kottayam, 1965, 298.
318. SCT, 92.
319. Cf. *ibid.*, 92, 102, 117.

320. Cf. *ibid.*, 82.
321. Cf. *ibid.*
322. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 21 f., 29; A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 63; Z. M. Paret, *op. cit.*, 298.
323. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 21 f.
324. *Ibid.*, 28.
325. Cf. *ibid.*, 68, 97, 101-114; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 99-103, 140-142; X. Koodapuzha, *art. cit.*, 27-29; Paul Varghese, "The Church in Kerala at the Coming of the Portuguese", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 32-36; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 38-41.
326. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 101-114; X. Koodapuzha, *art. cit.* 27-29.
327. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 113-115.
328. Cf. *ibid.*, 102-104, 112.
329. Cf. *ibid.*, 146-155.
330. *Ibid.*, 68. On page 57 the author speaks of the "normal hierarchical dependence" of the Syrian Christians of Malabar on the Seleucian Church. If "normal hierarchical dependence" is not something strictly juridical, what is it?
331. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 141 f.; 164, 168-171.
332. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 36; M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 143-146; Paul Verghese, "The Church in Kerala at the Coming of the Portuguese", 36.
333. Cf. Paul Verghese, "The Church in Kerala at the Coming of the Portuguese", 33. It would seem that Paul Verghese has clearly seen that P. T. Geevarghese's position cannot convince any "honest student" of history. But, he would on the whole play down the Nestorian — "East Syrian" — influence on the Malabar Church and emphasize its Jacobite — "West Syrian" — connection. He even claims that the Southist-Northist division among the Malabar Syrians "could not have been purely on racial grounds, but also on theological grounds." "In India the descendants of Thomas of Cana and party...should definitely have refused to accept the extreme diophysite teaching of the East Syrians, if they had any contacts at all with the West Syrians.", *Ibid.*, 36. However, he does not adduce any evidence in support of his conjecture.
334. Cf. E. M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, Kottayam, 1907, 68-98, cited by M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 103-105.
335. Cf. M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 109 f., 144; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 41, 64.
336. For instance, M. V. Cheriyan says: "The Christian Church in Kerala developed as an essentially independent church without hierarchical or juridical subjection to any foreign church, despite its relations with the churches of the Persian empire. This church also preserved the faith handed down from the days of the Apostle St. Thomas without being defiled by the heresies that

plagued the churches elsewhere. This juridical and hierarchical independence and purity of faith lasted until this church came into contact with the Portuguese missionaries...", Preface, *op. cit.*

337. Cf. *ibid.*, 143-146; Paul Verghese, "The Church in Kerala at the Coming of the Portuguese", 36.

338. Cf. Z. M. Paret, *op. cit.*, 219-227.

339. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 64.

340. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 38, 130, 177. Cf. also M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 72-75, 84-87.

341. Cf. footnote 335.

342. Cf. M. V. Cheriyan, *op. cit.*, 138; D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 133.

343. Cf. Paul Verghese, ed., *Die Syrischen Kirchen in Indien*, Stuttgart, 1974, 15.

344. Among the few that may not belong to this category are C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, P. Thomas, *op. cit.*

345. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 248.

346. Cf. *ibid.*

347. Cf. K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, London, 1953, part VII.

348. Cf. E. R. Hamby "The Syrian Church in India" *The Clergy Monthly*, XVI, 1952, 386.

349. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 79-94; A. Cherukarakunnel, "Indianization among the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala", 175. Cf. also *idem*, "Character and Life Style of Thomas Christians", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 131-133.

350. It has been claimed that the Eastern Christianity of Malabar is Hindu or Indian in culture, Christian in religion, and Oriental in worship. See P. Podipara, "Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion, Oriental in Worship", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 107-110. Here the question is how culture, religion and worship are related to and interact with one another, whether they form an organic whole or only a conglomeration of different elements. If religion is dialectically related to culture, what is required is a creative integration of Indian, Christian and Oriental traditions, and not their juxtaposition. And this would require a thorough transformation of culture and social life by religion and worship on the one hand, and religion and worship by culture and social life on the other. Obviously this is not possible without a deep and critical understanding of the traditions concerned. It would seem that those who propose Malabar's Syrian Christianity as a model of "Indianization" are not aware of the dialectics of "incarnation." And this is not surprising, considering the dualistic view of belief and life in traditional theology.

351. What Cardinal Joseph Parekkattil of Ernakulam says of the liturgical "adaptations" of the Syrian Church of Malabar may well apply to its "Indianization" also in other areas:

"Evidently those adaptations were only in the externals — I would say in the body of the liturgy — and did not affect its soul or spirit. Therefore they touched only the fringe of the question. What is more important is the soul of the liturgy, which takes into account the philosophical background, cultural heritages, spiritual patrimony, language, genius, idioms, music, philosophy, tastes, hopes, aspirations, needs, plans and prospects, in short, the life-situations of the contemporary men to whom the Church is making her diakonia (service) available.", "Adaptation and the Future of Christianity in India", G. Menachery, *op. cit.*, 190.

352. Cf. M. Carneiro, 804; "P. M. N. Barreto S. I. Sociis Europaeis", 416 f.; *Diamper*, session 3, decree 14. Cf. A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 150 f.

353. Cf. A. Valignano, 883; *Diamper*, session 8, decree 18.

354. Cf. *Diamper*, session 9, decree 2. Cf. also P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 83; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 175, 293 f.; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 22, 70, 142 ff.

355. It is in this sense that Ernst Bloch writes: "What is best in religion is that it calls forth heretics.", *Atheismus im Christentum*, Reinbeck 1970, 10. Cf. also *ibid.*, 15.

356. L. W. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, Cambridge, 1956, 173; F. E. Keay, *op. cit.*, 29, cited by C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 22; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 294.

357. Cf. Bernard Thoma *op. cit.*, II, 367; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 93, 95-99, 126, 128; K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 193, 278.

358. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 75, 214; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 17 f.

359. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 75.

360. Cf. A. Ettackakunnel, "The Role of the Syro-Malabar Church in the Field of Evangelization", G. Menachery, *op. cit.* 122-127.

361. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 260 f; 271, 274; VI, 90-92, 183; C. Ihmels, "Kaste, II. Kastenfrage in der Mission", ³RGG, III, 1163 f.

362. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 260 ff.; VI, 91 f.; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 97-99.

363. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 93, 95 f.; 158 ff.; VII, 308 ff.

364. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 199; VII, 308 f.

365. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 132.

366. *ibid.*, 133 f.

367. *Ibid.*, 134. Cf. also K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VII, 292 f.

368. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 84 f.

369. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 70.

370. *Ibid.*

371. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 90.
372. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 93, 198 ff.; VII, 308 f.
373. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 200; VII, 297.
374. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 277; VI, 93, 190 f.
375. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 190 f.; 199; VII, 291 f.
376. Cf. *ibid.*, VI, 200-204.
377. Cf. *ibid.*
378. Cf. *ibid.* Cf. also M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*, Madras, 1970.
379. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 283; VI, 74, 97, 206.
380. In their efforts to indianize their Portuguese names, some of these Christians have, perhaps unwittingly, ended up with their old caste names, for example, Kamath, Naik, Pai, Prabhu etc.
381. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, 74, 97.
382. Cf. M. Kanjirathinkal, "Christian Participation in Politics: A Case Study of the Kerala Church's Political Involvement", *Jeevadhara*, 31, January-February, 1976, 125-147.
383. Cf. E. Tisserant, SME, 3097, 3130. Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 138; *idem*, API, 28, 55.
384. Cf. *Vatican Syriac Codex*, cited by E. Tisserant, SME, 3097, 3130. Cf. also *ibid.*, 3139.
385. Cf. footnotes 124-126; Cf. also A. M. Mundadan, SCT, 168-170.
386. Cf. D. Daniel, *op. cit.*, 111; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 117 f.; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 223; E. Tisserant, SME, 3147.
387. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 368, 379; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 43, 54.
388. Cf. footnote 356.
389. Cf. G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 206; A. M. Mundadan, API, 61-66.
390. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 29; P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 98.
391. Cf. P. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 98.
392. Cf. C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 77-79, 117-119; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 220-226; Paul Verghese, "The Syrian Orthodox Church", 76-78.
393. Perhaps it would be highly rewarding to study the theological implications of the judgements of the learned Hindu judges on these complicated and strictly ecclesiastical matters.
394. Cited by Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 56.
395. Cited by G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 155.
396. *ibid.*
397. *Ibid.* Cf. also *ibid.*, 158.
398. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 268 f.; VI, 74, 77 f.
399. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 266-269; VI, 74-77.

400. Cf. *ibid.*, III, 255 f.; G. M. Moraes, *op. cit.*, 231-234, 296.

401. Cf. *Diamper*, session 2, decree 1: "Sanctam Catholicam, et Apostolicam Romanam Ecclesiam omnium Ecclesiarum Matrem et Magistram agnosco; et omnes quotquot ipsi non obediunt, haereticas esse Ecclesias, Schismaticas, atque inobedientes Jesu Christo, ejusque mandatis, nec non Hierchie Ecclesiasticae ab ipso institutae, ac demum extra aeternam esse salutem. . . necnon confiteor, omnes quotquot Romani Pontifici Christi in terris Vicario non obediunt, tamquam inobedientes mandatis ipsius Christi, ab aeterna salute excludendos."

402. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 112.

403. *Diamper*, session 3, decree 6. *Diamper* condemned Nestorius, Theodore and Diodore as "Haeretici maledicti excommunicati, ab Ecclesia damnati, aeternoque igni ob sua crimina, suasque haereses addicti.", *Ibid.*, decree 9.

404. Cf. A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, I, ²1975, 447-450; L. Abramowsky, "Nestorius" ³RGG, IV, 405 f.; R. Leys, "Nestorianismus", ²LThK, VII, 885 f.

405. Cf. A. Grillmeier, "Das Scandalum oecumenicum des Nestorius in kirchlich-dogmatischer und theologiegeschichtlicher Sicht", *Scholastik*, XXXVI, 1961, 321-356.

406. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 98; P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 155 f.

407. Cf. Bernard Thoma, *op. cit.*, II, 178-180.

408. Cf. *ibid.*, 180-182, 383-388; C. P. Mathew and M. M. Thomas, *op. cit.*, 77-84.

409. Cf. G. Hasenhüttel, *Charisma, Ordnungsprinzip der Kirche*, Freiburg 1969.

410. Cf. P. Podipara, *op. cit.*, 202 ff.

411. Cf. H. Küng, *op. cit.*, 18-23.

412. Cf. K. S. Latourette, *op. cit.*, III, 264, 276, 283; VI, 205 f.

Discussion Forum

Already in 1972 we opened a column in *Jeevadhara* entitled 'Discussion Forum' and it was stated then that the continuance of this new feature would depend entirely on the response it met with from our readers. The response hitherto has not yet been very encouraging.

The Christian Church is today in a transition and in the birth-pangs of renewal. Christians here, in India, are becoming more and more conscious and ever prouder of their national heritage and ancient culture. The specific purpose of *Jeevadhara* is to contribute towards the development of a theology and praxis in the Indian way of life and thought. It calls for deep thinking and fresh discussion.

We have no dearth of theologians and theological writings. But it is doubtful if there is sufficient understanding and discussion among the theologians and a critical evaluation of writings. *Jeevadhara* has been trying to promote the habit of theological reflection and arouse interest in theological studies and discussion of them. 'Discussion Forum' is specifically meant for this purpose. As a rule only experts are invited to contribute to *Jeevadhara* and as such they have full freedom to express their views. Still there can be differences of opinion. It is no use criticizing the contributors in private that they do not go the traditional way. We need to map out a new path. Readers are welcome to make their comments in *Jeevadhara*, provided they have solid arguments in support of their positions.

Here Davis Kanjirathingal reviews an article by John Arakkal on "The Dialectics of Belief and Life: the Need for a New Orientation in Theology" in *Jeevadhara* 31, pp. 34-110.

General Editor

THEOLOGY IN AN IDENTITY-CRISIS? DISCUSSION OF A THEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

The search for a new method is a striking phenomenon in contemporary theology. It is held that the crisis felt today results from the inadequacy of traditional theology and its method to bearing witness effectively to the truth of Christianity in the contemporary world. This is a view shared by the vast majority of theologians. However, in the attempt at theological renewal, their attitude to traditional theology varies considerably. For some the required renewal consists simply in a reformulation of the past theology in a new language. Others propose basic changes but, on the whole, in conformity with past theology. Still others defend an almost radical break with the past.

Theology has always reflected, to some extent, the crises and tendencies of contemporary culture. The awareness of the trans-cultural and trans-epochal differences as well as of the multiplicity of the sources of human experience, has become very strong nowadays. Accordingly, the present-day search for a new theological method reflects the pluralism, which is a basic characteristic of contemporary culture. It is, in fact, an endeavour to work out new *situational* methods which correspond to the problems and needs of various socio-cultural situations.

There is a real search for new answers to the problems of man, on the whole, but above all in the West, where the religious answers traditionally given to the problems of man have become irrelevant for people who participate in a world-view which has been created by the development of the non-religious sciences and of technology. Christianity in the non-Western world which, for the most part, is identified with that of the mission countries, feels today, more than ever, the need for an indigenous, autonomous character; the need for independence and self-support. An analysis of these various situations or of the complex problems entailed in the search for new theological methods suitable for them cannot be attempted here. The intention of this article is to discuss the basic aspects of a new methodology, which, in the context of this general search, has been proposed by J. Arakkal in his study

*Dialectics of Belief and Life: The Need for a New Orientation in Theology*¹. This study deserves appreciation for the importance and urgency of the question it treats of as well as for its comprehensive and serious handling of it. The issues raised are complex and merit a detailed consideration, but obviously they can be discussed only briefly in a summary consideration like the present one.

1. The nature of theology and the role of the theologian

Christian theology has been generally understood as *fides quaerens intellectum*. Faith is understood in this context not simply as the faith of the theologian as an individual believer, but also as the faith of the community of believers to which the theologian belongs. This dictum itself is understood, therefore, in the context of the essential relationship of the theologian, as an individual believer, to the community. Thus theology as '*quaestio*' as a searching reflection, is the constant endeavour of the believing community to gain understanding of the faith, to which it is already existentially committed. This endeavour itself, conducted with the human means of knowledge (therefore a 'human undertaking' in the true sense), is illumined and guided by faith. It is evident that theology as such is a concern of the believing community, of the Church as a whole, and not the preserve of a cultured élite. There are 'theologians' in the Church, to be sure, who are entrusted, in a special way, with the task of reflecting upon the faith. But this itself shows the status and the role of the theologian. In the fulfilment of his task he is a representative of the ecclesial community. Within the Church he encourages and confirms his brethren in the common faith; outside, he is a spokesman of the ecclesial community (not as a polemic defender, of course, but as an open-minded dialogue-partner)². Precisely because of this responsibility and commitment to the community, the theologian should not reject an appropriate and well-considered

1. J. Arakkal, "The Dialectics of Belief and Life: The Need for a New Orientation in theology", *Jeevadhara*, 31 (1976), pp. 34-110.

2. Cf. K. Rahner, "Über die theoretische Ausbildung künftiger Priester heute", *Schriften zur Theologie*, Vol. VI, Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1965, 139-167, pp. 148-149.

vigilance on the part of the pastoral authorities in the Church over his activity. Needless to say, this vigilance is properly exercised only when it is pastoral guidance in relation to the theologian and does not become an authoritarian control. The problem, in the present-day Church, is not so much that of the need or needlessness of a magisterial authority as of her "not having yet achieved a satisfactory working relationship with the intellectuals and prophets in the Church"³.

Very different from this seems to be the understanding of theology and the role of the theologian, which A. maintains in his study. According to it, theology has hitherto been characterized by "the irrational, decisionistic understanding of Christian belief, the authority-bound adherence to doctrines and norms of conduct and the interest of Church authority in theological conformism" (p. 91)⁴. Theology must be, on the contrary, a ratio-critical study of Christianity, considered as a historical reality and taken holistically in its dialectically related theory-praxis dimensions. Such a study aims at evaluating and determining, through a historio-critical analysis, the truth and validity of Christianity by means of a reciprocal criticism — namely, of Christianity's claims, on the one hand, and of its performance, on the other hand — and a comparison of Christianity with other religions and with the sciences, especially the anthropological ones like sociology, psychology, the philosophy of language, etc. (cf. pp. 96-97, 102, 110 and *passim*).

2. The plea for a 'scientific' theology

The question of the *scientific* character of theology has been very much discussed in recent times, especially in connection with the development of the other sciences. The rapid development and the astonishing achievements of the natural sciences, have brought them prestige and recognition. As a result, 'science' has come to be identified, in an almost exclusive way, with the natural sciences. This unavoidably raises the question: What is it that makes a branch of human knowledge a 'science'? The total field

3. A. Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1973, p. 102.

4. The Numbers given in brackets refer to the article under discussion.

of human knowledge being vast and complex, it is obvious that the methodological principles, according to which the various branches of human knowledge conduct their investigations, cannot be the same. Nevertheless, the 'scientific method' in the contemporary world has come to mean the common features of the methods of the natural sciences. According to this view, the other branches of human knowledge can be considered 'sciences' only in an improper and derivative sense, i. e. in so far as they employ formally identical methods as the natural sciences. Almost all the anthropological sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) have complied with this demand. Most of contemporary Western philosophy has degenerated into a positivistic theory of knowledge and language, and where there is still talk of an 'ontology', it is more than anything an immanentistic ontology which does not open itself into a real transcendence. In this situation, the theologian, and above all the academic theologian, finds himself in an awkward position in relation to other scientists and feels compelled to follow the same path as they, if he is to find recognition of his position. Three characteristics of the scientific theology as A. propounds it are worth considering briefly:

i. Historical

Those who advocate a 'scientific' theology want, first of all, to bring the method of their study of Christianity as close as possible to that of the 'positive' sciences. They regard theology a ratio-critical study of Christianity considered as a *historical* reality. The assumption that Christianity is a historical reality, is apparently an innocuous and acceptable statement. As a matter of fact, the historical nature of Christian revelation and the Church has been amply brought to light in recent theology: the historical nature of the realization of God's plan of salvation for mankind, the Church as the continuation of the mystery of Christ through history, the historical development of the Church's awareness of the implications of her faith, and so on. In this sense, there can be, of course, a profitable historical theology⁵. In the above-mentioned theological trend, however, the *historical* nature of Christianity seems to be impregnated with an *immanentistic* emphasis. Christianity is con-

5. Cf. W. Kasper, *The methods of Dogmatic Theology*, Shannon: Ecclesia Press, 1969, pp. 33-44.

sidered a *natural* reality and, as in the case of other natural realities, its origin, development and relevance are to be studied and determined by a historio-critical method. Here the transcendental dimension of Christianity is not directly denied, but it is held that theology as a historical science must study its object from the view-point of natural-historical and socio-cultural factors. The supernatural, mystical dimension of Christianity, granting that it exists, cannot be of importance to theology *as science*, for a scientific theology cannot afford to be 'abstract and unhistorical'. As far as the scientific theologian is concerned, Christianity is those historical (-empirical) data which it has shown itself to be, in theory and praxis, in the course of its origin and development. Only in this respect can it be the subject matter of a theological science (cf. pp. 76 ff., 96 and *passim*). This study will lay bare the historical factors and the contingent circumstances which caused or favoured the origin and development of Christianity. It is presumed that such a critical analysis will prove the natural, human character of Christianity, and this would then justify the criticism of it. "The historical study of Christianity's origin and development may have by itself a critical or emancipatory impact. It may demystify some of the Church teachings and practices by revealing their historically conditioned nature, for it will be possible to criticise something that proves to be neither suprahuman nor timeless" (pp. 96-97).

It is indisputable that historical factors have played a role in the development and growth of Christianity. But to hold that those historical, contingent factors alone are sufficient to explain its origin and growth, or that the theologian as a scientist does not know, and cannot show, within his science whether there is anything 'more' in Christianity, which cannot be explained by these factors, amounts to ignoring the supernatural, revelational character of Christianity. This is the corner-stone of the Christian faith and theology.

ii. *Ratio-critical*

Secondly, a scientific theology intends to be a ratio-critical study of its subject matter. To criticism is ascribed an emancipatory role: with its awareness of socio-political, psychological, linguistic and other structures, which are at work in society, of their enslaving impact and of their tendency to legitimize and

stabilize existing situations, the ratio-critical method would unveil the negative, changeable aspects of the situation, promoting thereby the changing of those aspects. Criticism in theology has to be many-sided. It is by criticism of its subject matter — by unveiling the knowledge-governing interests and the [practical-material interests that have played a part in the origin and development of Christian theory and praxis, — that scientific theology must show the historically conditioned, i. e. the relative and changeable nature of Christian belief and life. However in its criticism of the non-ecclesiastical structures and of other sciences, theology should take “extra care not to criticise them *ex cathedra* as if it (theology) knew everything and knew it better than others” (p. 102). It is in its letting itself be criticised by other sciences that theology engages “in an open exchange of views and experiences with men of other ways of thinking” (ibid., cf. also p. 100). Thus it has to struggle to secure for itself a modest place in the midst of the reciprocal criticisms of competing sciences and theories, and this, apparently, by accepting the superior competence of the other sciences in several questions which are also the concern of theology, as for example, psychology and sociology in matters of sexual and family ethics (cf. p. 72), linguistic philosophy in the question of the meaning and truthfulness of the doctrines of Christianity (cf. p. 98).

Such a scientific theology with its ratio-critical method is supposed to create the possibility of a responsible acceptance of the Christian faith by man. “Theology must show that its premise is something that can be responsibly accepted by human reason” (pp. 97-98). Thus reason is considered to be the supreme judge of the veracity of whatever is socially and linguistically mediated. “In fact, to exempt a particular view or experience of the need for rational examination and confirmation is to immunise it and expose it to ideological misuse” (p. 98).

In regard to this point it may be said that the doctrines of faith are, of course, of a cognitive nature and are linguistically mediated. But [it is difficult to concede that whatever is of a cognitive nature has to come within the measure of reason. It is also difficult to concede the claim of the proposed scientific theology that our commitment in life to the doctrines of faith is a responsible act on our part, and one worthy of man, only when the

truthfulness of these doctrines has been confirmed by rationalistic examination. Faith is not the outcome of reasoning. Furthermore, it is a fact of experience, that such a hegemony of reason in the matter of personal commitment is neither allowed nor possible even in the non-religious sphere of man's life. "It is constitutive of the very essence of faith, that faith seeks understanding. Not so much in order to be faith. The existence of faith does not depend on the achievement or non-achievement of the intellect..."⁶ instead the intellect achieves its real fulfilment when it submissively embraces faith. We must say, on the other hand, that the doctrines of faith, for the reason that they do not satisfy the criteria of *rationality*, do not fall into the category of irrationality-absurdity. In the realm of man's religious life there is a 'logic of faith' with its reasons and rules, which exceed those of the '*ratio*'. The doctrines of faith agree with this 'logic of faith' and by that they have a *reasonability* of a religious nature and hence their credibility also. They are thus worthy of being believed and man's act of faith is a responsible act. The expressions of popular religiosity may at times seem to approximate to a certain credulity. But the proper understanding of the act of faith which is required of the faithful in the Church, has little in common with that kind of credulity. In proposing the doctrines of faith, the Church has shown judicious discernment. At the same time she has also shown due obediential reverence for the Mystery and the Revelation of God, who is the source of Revelation. Therefore, the appeal to the authority of the revealing God, however outmoded some may consider it to be, is and must remain a fundamental principle in theology, although it is never to be employed as an easy way out of the trouble of further thinking.

The truthfulness of revealed truths is, in the last analysis, founded on the authority of the revealing God, and it holds good even in the case of those revealed truths which are found to be true even when considered from a rational point of view. However, this does not paralyze the role of criticism in theology. It only means that the theologian has to practise his criticism as an intrinsic element of all thought (judgement), with an interior faith-

6, E. Mechels, *Analogie bei Erich Przywara und Karl Barth*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974, p. 41. (tr. by me).

attitude. Here it is appropriate to recall what was said concerning the relationship of the theologian to the ecclesial community. Were this aspect given due attention, the theologian would not permit himself, in his investigation, the strictness of a 'scientist' and would be unconcerned and uninterested about what would remain of faith, once his intellectual operations are concluded.

iii. *Presuppositionless*

Thirdly, a scientific theology aims at being a presuppositionless investigation. "The propositions of belief may not, therefore, be taken as absolutely true and valid in advance. They may be so for the believer but not for theology which has to investigate rather than presuppose their truth and validity" (p. 98). "Belief... is for theology something *problematic* in the full sense of the word" (p. 93). From this it would follow that whether, to what extent, and in what sense, the doctrines of faith can be considered valid and true will be decided at the end on the basis of whether or not they have stood the test of the ratio-critical analysis. More than once in the past similar attempts to realize a presuppositionless study of the faith and reality of Christianity have been made. But these very attempts have not been without some unconscious presupposition. Thus, for instance, in the work of the theologians, who, for the sake of the 'scientific' nature of their research, refused to consider the supernatural character of Christianity and wanted to explain its origin and development in a purely natural way, this very intention worked as an unconscious, powerful presupposition, which was responsible for many a forced, distorted interpretation of several biblical and historical data about Christianity (e. g. the 'Tübingen school'). The conducting of the study without any presupposition whatever, is a practically unrealizable programme. It has been found that the sciences, and *even* the natural sciences, work with some presupposition, which, as accepted, is already some kind of 'faith', whether the scientist is explicitly aware of it or not. "Anyone who has ever really collaborated in the progress of any science knows, from his own inner experience, that in the doorway of science stands an exteriorly indiscernible, but throughout indispensable guide: the forwards-viewing faith (*der vorwärts-*

7. Cf. H. Harris, *The Tübingen School*, Oxford: O. U. P., 1973, pp. 150 ff.

schauende Glaube). There is scarcely any affirmation which, by its misleading nature, has caused more harm as that of the presuppositionlessness of science"⁸.

Obviously, the theologian cannot, and is not expected to, represent to himself the doctrines of faith just as one of the simple faithful in the Church often do. But to consider them as not more than mere working-hypotheses, would be very insufficient for theology. For theology is not merely a philosophy of religion or Christianity. A study will not be theology simply for the reason that it is busy with Christianity as its subject matter. Something of a formal nature must be present in that study, and this is the *fides qua*: the faith-attitude with which that study is conducted. If this is lacking, then no amount of scientism will make theology really 'theological'. This, on the other hand, does not contravene the scientific character of theology. Theology is a science in a true sense, but "scientificity (*Wissenschaftlichkeit*) of theology does not mean that it has to subject itself to a general concept of science at the cost of the reality which is assigned to it"⁹. However, this does not imply that the faith has to be accepted as a closed treasure-box, the contents of which one is forbidden to examine. Theology is by its very nature '*fides quaerens intellectum*', an inquiry into the faith. What is suggested here is only that the investigation into the faith (*fides quae*) is not to be conducted without the personal faith-attitude (*fides qua*) of the theologian. As a result, the very opposition between theology and faith, which A. over and over again emphasizes, is quite inappropriate. Furthermore, the theologian himself, in the pursuit of his research, should not forget or lose his identity as a believer-member in the ecclesial community¹⁰. As regards theological investigation, A. himself does not fail to realize this point when he says: "Indeed, the theologian knows that there is much that is true and valuable in Christianity" (p. 103). Should not, then, this pre-knowledge in the theologian, if its presence in him is to be meaningful, be allowed to play a

8. M. Planck, *Vorträge und Erinnerungen*, Darmstadt, 1963⁷, p. 247, as quoted by D. Mieth, "Wissenschaftscharakter der Theologie", in *FZTPh*, 23: 1-2 (1976), 13-41, p. 32. (tr. by me).

9. E. Mechels. op. cit., p. 140.

10. Cf. G. Widmer, "La théologie comme science ou comme sagesse", *FZTPh*, 23: 1-2 (1976), 42-67, pp. 56-57.

positive role in his scientific research, thus impregnating and characterizing it? Or should it be just tolerated in his scientific investigation together with that dominant and counteracting force of radical relativizing, according to which it is equally possible that those true and valid aspects be false and invalid? It is quite inadequate, if theology is to consider the fundamental truths of the Christian faith as not more than conceptual hypotheses to work with, which at the most have a chance of being true and valid.

Man's search for truth is never a one-way affair; it is at the same time truth's search for man. Human endeavour from the very beginning has been sustained and guided by the light of truth, as the thinkers of the past have acknowledged. "The way to truth (*methodos*) can only be truth itself... Methodology is a conscious recollection along the way that truth is accompanying us"¹¹. A 'technological' conception of truth, which considers it as the 'final product' of 'our thinking activity', is regrettable.

3. A new theological method on the basis of theory-praxis dialectics

The new method proposed in the article under consideration, is based upon a criticism of the theology of the past and of the philosophical foundations upon which it rests. Human life is a whole consisting of theory and praxis, which are in a dialectical interaction. The terms of this dialectics in human existence are expressed with the following or similar correlatives: intellect-will; theory (doctrine) praxis; belief (faith, conviction) - life¹²; contem-

11. W. Kasper, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

12. To be more exact, it is necessary to make a distinction between the terms 'faith' and 'belief'. The sociologists of religion consider 'faith' as the personal, inter-or act of assent of the believing subject and 'belief' as the objective creed in its conceptual content, to which assent is made. This distinction is clearer in the French equivalents of these terms: '*la foi*' (faith) and '*la croyance*' (belief), the latter being oftentimes used also in plural. Conceding the distinction between the 'subjective-personal' and 'objective' aspects, it must be said that such a sociological distinction is too generic and loose for the purpose of theology. Because, belief in this sense can mean any assumption or supposi-

plation - action; possible (ideal, abstract) - real (actual, concrete), and so on. A. contends that theology has been till today regrettably one-sided, for it has been simply the thematization of the belief-aspect of Christianity. This error can be traced back to the philosophical foundations of the traditional theology (above all Thomistic philosophy), according to which the ultimate goal of human life was the beatific *vision* "which is essentially an act of the speculative intellect (?)" (p. 37). It can be traced back to the Christian Scriptures, to St. Paul (cf. *ibid.*) and to Jesus Christ himself, who "promised the pure of heart the vision of God" (*ibid.*).

In addition, theology has been hitherto quite selective in its thematization of the Christian theory and praxis. Leaving out the palatable aspects of the Christian theory and of the Christian praxis, theology made a selective appropriation (cf. pp. 82 ff.) of the bright aspects in them, so that, quite in conformity with theology's apologetical intentions, an "ideal" and appealing image of Christianity resulted (cf. pp. 81, 86). In this way, the Christian praxis, which is important for the right understanding of Christianity, does not

tion of a religious nature in its objective, thematic aspect—even religious legends, myths, local beliefs, etc. Moreover, the term 'faith' is not used in the Church and in theology to mean exclusively the personal act of the subject, but also to indicate the faith of the Church in its 'objective' aspect, without, however, falling in that generality of the sociologist. Arakkal seems to use 'faith' and 'belief' as generally interchangeably, and they mean that which the Christians (as individuals or as group) have believed, considered in its conceptual-theoretical aspect. The theological term 'faith' is thereby given the generality of the term 'belief' which the latter has in its sociological use.

Another observation may be also appropriate in this connexion. When A. speaks of the dialectics of 'belief' and 'life', he sets the term *life* as the counterpart of belief. But, precisely speaking, *life* must not be considered as the antithetical term in this dialectics, for *life* is in man the moment of synthesis, wherein belief (conviction) and praxis (action) are in a unified synthesis. However, for the sake of clarity in this discussion, we have also employed 'belief' and 'life' as dialectical correlatives.

get adequate consideration in theology. Dogmatic theology is a theoretical construct independent of Christian praxis (cf. pp. 35, 76, 108); in those theological disciplines which are concerned with the practical aspects of the Christian life (Christian ethics, Church history, Church law, etc.) the relation between Christian doctrine and Christian praxis is considered merely as an application of doctrine and not in a dialectical way (cf. pp. 48, 109). Thus in this understanding of the theory-praxis relationship, theory is given primacy over praxis. In the light of such an analysis, A. proposes a new method on the basis of the theory-praxis relationship, considering them *holistically* and understanding their relationship to each other *dialectically* (cf. p. 93).

i. The holistic approach versus selective appropriation

The selectivity practised in theology is of two kinds: a selection of the Christian theory, neglecting the Christian praxis; and even in this case, a further selection of the bright aspects, neglecting the unpalatable aspects. Theology never acknowledged this selectivity openly. It presented the 'ideal' image of Christianity, produced in view of theology's apologetic purpose, as if it were the whole of Christianity. Scientific theology, on the contrary, must consider Christianity holistically, taking together its theory-praxis dimensions. In this examination it must thematize Christianity's palatable as well as unpalatable aspects. The elucidation of the negative aspects is expected to have a *neutralizing and relativizing impact* upon the positive aspects and this would relativize Christianity's claims, based exclusively upon its bright aspects (cf. p. 80). Thus, for instance, the fact that Jesus recommended(?) the payment of tax to oppressive colonial Rome, relativizes the claim of Christianity that he stood always for social justice and for the cause of the poor (cf. p. 84); the claim that Christianity proclaims the equality of all men, is relativized by St. Paul's legitimization, in his own times, of the slavery system (cf. pp. 62, 64, 66); the claim that Christianity stands for universal brotherhood, for peace and understanding among peoples, is relativised by the history of Christianity's intolerance of other peoples, religions and views—e. g. the Nazi oppression, the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition (cf. p. 58); the claim that Christianity defends the goodness of the human body, is relativized by its 'anti-sexual bias' and rigid sexual ethics (cf. pp. 67 ff., 79, 85). As a result, Christianity cannot be considered the ideal religion it claims to be.

The question to be asked, at this point, is what is to be considered as the 'whole' of Christian belief and praxis? A. seems to understand it in a merely empirical sense. Thus the whole of 'Christian belief' would be identical with the totality of the views and opinions, which people, who are 'Christians' according to their religious adherence, have held in religious or other matters. Likewise, the whole of the 'Christian praxis' would be what 'Christians' have done somewhere at some time. This is the consequence of that understanding which limits Christianity to its empirical manifestation. But 'Christianity' is not simply a term for what the Christians have factually thought and done. Even for Christians, 'Christianity' remains, in a real sense, always an ideal 'to be realized', a goal 'to be achieved'. It is impossible to understand Christianity properly, if we disregard Christianity's transcendental, mystical dimension, which really belongs to its *true whole*¹³. In the *empirical whole* of Christianity there is a measure of 'non-Christianity' (i. e. what does not belong to the true whole of Christianity), and *vice versa*, the true Christianity in its entire perfection is not realized in historical Christianity, so that a perfect convergence between the two is never found. But this is true of any (high) ideal in relation to its historical realization. In fact, which of us is capable of an entirely selfless, perfect love such as Christianity preaches? And if a perfect convergence of the ideal and its realization is demanded of the Christians in order to grant the truth of the Christian ideal, then we will have to say that in all the world only Jesus Christ is capable of being a *perfect Christian*, so much so that, concretely speaking, the way of realization of the Christian ideal for us Christians is, indeed, the '*sequela Christi*'. But it will not be to the point, if a critic of Christianity were to say that Christians would do better to abandon

13. G. Widmer considers the task of theology to be the researching into and clarifying of 'la christianite' (which we may explain as 'the specifically Christian reality'). He distinguishes it from the expressions 'la chrétienté' and 'le christianisme'. '*Christianite*' is a theological category, whereas '*chretiente*' somewhat equivalent to the English word 'Christendom') is a historical category and '*christianisme* (somewhat equivalent to the English word 'Christianity' is primarily, and above all a socio-cultural category. Cf. art. cit., p. 48.

the ideal of perfect love, as they do not and cannot actually practise it as such. A judgement of the measure of realization of the Christian ideal in the actual praxis of Christianity as a whole cannot be made without the dangers of generalization, for the measure of this realization depends ultimately on individual Christians, on whether and to what extent they let their lives be transformed by the Christian faith, thereby realizing the synthesis of the Christian belief and life in their personal lives. We have a remarkable measure of this synthesis in the lives of saintly Christians (although they themselves are not without faults). In these her holy sons and daughters the Church herself is holy in a real sense. By this we do not mean that the life-transforming power of the Christian faith is limited to the individual sphere or that the Christian faith does not require to be life-transforming also at the social level¹⁴. What is meant is rather that the realization of the Christian ideal or of any (high) ideal on the macro-level is a much slower process than on the individual level, but that the factual realisation of the ideal in the lives of several individual Christians because of the 'essential' relationship between the individual and the community (a community is constituted of human individuals), is a clear proof of the basic realizability of the ideal as such also on the macro-level, though of course with a proviso for human limitations.

Along with this history of conformity of the Christian belief and life, there is the history of the discrepancy between them. The *formal and fundamental cause* of this discrepancy is human weakness and sinfulness, from which no Christian, not even the highest authorities in the Church, is immune. Life being a historical realization, the concrete forms of this discrepancy (as also the concrete forms of the conformity) are characterised by the socio-cultural circumstances in which Christians lived (and still live), e. g. the economic exploitation and oppression of the weak, the misuse of power and wealth, and so on. They are the 'unchristian' in the historical Christianity, and because of them the holy Church acknowledges herself to be always also a sinful Church, an '*ecclesia semper reformanda*'. Such a negativity of the

14. Cf. G. Stachel, "Das Verhältnis von Theorie und praxis im Thegiestudium" *TThZ*, 84: 5 (1975), 287-296, p. 294.

Christian praxis is present even in the lives of the saintly Christians—again, to a great measure, due to the influence of the socio-cultural circumstances of their times: thus, for instance, the desire for sanctity of life led the saints of the past often to a hatred of the world and consequently to a flight from it. The intolerance of heretical views and of the heretics themselves was, in many instances, an expression of a zeal for truth, which was recognized and acknowledged in the authoritative teaching of the Christian faith; love for the Christian religion oftentimes led almost to a contempt for other religions. In what sense and to what extent is the true Christian faith itself to be held responsible for those well- or ill-intentioned practices of Christians, which, considered from the socio cultural situation of our times and also according to our capacity for objective judgement, are condemnable? It is plain that they cannot be considered to have been inspired by true Christian faith and its proper understanding, although those who were responsible for them have attempted, out of malice or ignorance and pious narrow-mindedness, to legitimize them by producing justifications for them from the Christian Scriptures and have accordingly constructed, in the name of the Christian faith, convenient theories in support of them. If, therefore, they do not belong to the true whole of the Christian faith and the true Christian faith as such is not to be held responsible for them, it is not right to conclude, on their basis, an intrinsic negativity of the Christian faith as such, and hence the relativity of the validity and relevance of Christianity as such.

This being the case, what can the holistic approach mean in theology? It is evident that the belief and praxis of historical Christianity do not constitute a harmonious, unambiguous whole, so much so that the attempt to bring them within a single thematization will yield only a meaningless whole with a host of inner contradictions. As a matter of fact, A. is aware of the unavoidability of some kind of selectivity in theology, so that towards the end of his reflections he directs his criticism more precisely to the reluctance which theology has shown hitherto to acknowledge openly the fact that it practises a certain selectivity, as well as the criteria and modalities of this selectivity (cf. 104-105). In the perspective of the holistic approach, on the contrary, it is necessary to consider Christianity as an ambiguous reality, which theology would partially recommend and partially

condemn. Through a ratio critical analysis, and in the light of the results of other anthropological sciences, theology will, on the one hand, bring out the valid and relevant aspects of Christian theory and praxis and thus approve and recommend them. On the other hand, the same ratio-critical analysis will lay bare the negative and oppressive aspects in Christian doctrine and praxis, and condemn and reject them (cf. p. 105).

The point of the holistic approach, as far as the question of criticism of the negative aspects in Christian theory and praxis is concerned, is not of such decisive importance as it would at first seem to be. Even the moderate, non-extremist trend in contemporary theology disapproves, unhesitatingly, just as the proposed new method intends to do, of the negative aspects in Christianity. The difference is only that the former would consider these aspects as regrettable and condemnable aberrations from the true Christian ideal, in historical Christianity, which are to be traced back to the momentary or continuous overpowering effect of human sinfulness and weakness (to which Christians are as liable as other men) in those Christians who were factually responsible for those 'practices' or for the making of those 'doctrines', which they legitimized in the name of Christianity. The new theology, will hold that Christianity as such, the very Christian belief, is responsible for those negative aspects and will thereby conclude that there is a fundamental, intrinsic negativity in Christianity, wherefore Christianity's relevance and validity would be only partial and relative.

Notwithstanding these critical remarks, A. is right in saying that the thematization of the negative aspects in theory and praxis of historical Christianity will be of great advantage for the Church, although as has already been stated, this should not lead to a relativization of the validity and relevance of Christianity as such. Such a thematization, which should happen in theology as well as in preaching, will create and keep alive in the Church the awareness of the need for an ever greater conformity of the Christian life to the Christian faith.

ii. *The 'dialectics' of theory and praxis and its applicability in theology*

Theory and praxis act upon, and condition, each other.

Human life itself consists of the historical process of their dialectical interaction. In order that this dialectical process may really take place, neither of the terms in it should be absolutized; both theory and praxis are to be taken as intrinsically relative and subject to change. Neither of them should have primacy over the other, for the subordination of either will block the process and immunize the absolutized part from critical examination. Praxis is not "a mere consequence of a certain understanding ... or an application of a given theory" (p. 42) but "man's conscious acting upon reality, human and non-human" (*ibid.*). Despite his professed programme to be impartial between theory and praxis, as a matter of fact A. himself accords to praxis a certain primacy over theory. Knowledge is understood "as an active, more or less schematic modelling of reality mediated by our language and life situation and influenced by practical interests" (p. 40).

In its application to theology, theory-praxis dialectics should mean the reciprocal conditioning and transformation of the Christian faith and life in the historical process of their interaction. A. finds support in the Bible for such a dialectical understanding of the Christian faith and life (cf. p. 38). According to him, theology should not be the presentation of an "ideal" Christianity, but the thematization of the dialectics of Christian belief and life (cf. 94). He envisages a strict and extensive application of the theory-praxis dialectics in all fields of theology (cf. *ibid.*). It is not intended here to question the applicability or the usefulness of such a methodological scheme. However, some caution is necessary and so are certain reservations with respect to a strict application in all fields of theology indiscriminately and in the same manner.

According to the principle of dialectics, both theory and praxis are in a historical process of interaction and, as a result, they are also in a process of constant change. Let us consider the application of this principle in theology more closely. A process of constant change, as required by the 'dialectical' nature, of things is fully acceptable in the acting of Christian faith upon Christian life. The Biblical texts which A. adduces in justification and support of the dialectical interpretation of Christian theory and praxis are to be understood, it

should seem, precisely in this sense, i. e. they point to the necessity of letting the faith which Christians profess transform their lives, so that there may always be a growing conformity and consistency between the two. This is what Jesus meant when He said: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and not do what I tell you? Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ..." (Lk 6:46); or when St John speaks of 'loving God not in word or speech but in deed and in truth', of 'keeping the commandments', of 'following the truth', and so on (the Johannine epistles)¹⁵. The OT and the NT abound in such passages. There is always much that is 'unchristian' in the life of Christians, so that the life of the Christian is in a real sense a constant *metanoia*, a process of constant conversion and transformation *into* the 'new creature' which through Baptism one has *already* become in Jesus Christ.

But when the dialectical relationship between Christian belief and life means the transforming impact of the actual life of Christians upon Christian faith, one has to distinguish the possibility and extent of the change in Christian faith. In reality, such a change of Christian doctrine can and does happen in accordance with the needs of the historical situation of the Christian praxis in those aspects of Church-teaching which are concerned with the practical aspects of the organisation of the pastoral life of the Church or in the religious life of believers. For example, the Church has always shown a well-considered readiness to change her doctrine in several cases (although unfortunately often with a considerable lack of urgency, which is to be explained, on the one hand, as due to the necessity of studying thoroughly the situation as well as the change to be brought about, and, on the other hand, as due to the self-preserving tendency present in all systems): e. g. in the concrete organization of the hierarchical administration of the Church, in the prescriptions of religious practices and observances, in the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy, in the administration of other sacraments and even in the norms of moral conduct of the

15. For a detailed and excellent treatment of this aspect of the Christian life, see J. Vadakethala, *Love to the Brethren in John* (unpub. dissertation defended at the Pont. Biblical Institute: Rome), 1974, esp. chapters VIII and IX.

faithful, in so far as such changes in the norms of moral conduct do not endanger fundamental truths of the faith of the Church. A striking concrete example of such a dialectical, transformational impact of the praxis upon doctrine is found already in the early Church, namely, in the abrogation of the Mosaic law of circumcision. Pastoral understanding and prudence have been the guiding principle of the Church in these matters.

Belief-life dialectics assumes a quite different nature and seriousness in the case of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. We know that the Christian faith is not something like a political programme which the people concerned can, from time to time, discuss and modify according to the latest trends and tastes. "The Church is not simply an association for the advancement of religious knowledge... It is bound together not simply by a common method but by a common creed"¹⁶, common to the past, to the present and to the future. This is the faith of the apostolic Church, the *depositum fidei* which has been handed down to the Church as normative for the believers' faith in Jesus Christ in all times and places. The Church has the responsibility of safeguarding this *depositum fidei* diligently and faithfully and transmitting it from generation to generation. The expression *depositum fidei* might evoke in some the impression that it entails a 'conservative' and 'undynamic' approach in theology. But we know that this traditional expression, properly understood, denotes just the Church's faith as it is alive in the life of the Church. As the *lived* tradition, it is precisely the source of dynamism. Hence it is obvious that this *depositum fidei* is primarily, and as such, the Mystery that has been revealed in Jesus Christ and which Jesus Christ is, and not the formulae or the theoretical explanations, which have accrued in the Church down through the centuries in her constant endeavour of mediation and of articulate expression of that Mystery, while she lived It. Such an understanding opens up and founds the dynamism of our faith. The Church can supersede the old formulae and dare ex-cogitate new ones, without superseding the *faith* on which she

16. A. Dulles, op. cit., op. cit., p. 100.

lives.¹⁷ The faith of the Church is, of course, in a historical process of development, but this development is at the same time a sound and dynamic continuity with a tradition.

This holds good even in the case of present-day awareness of the possibility and givenness of salvation outside the Church, which A. considers as "a break from the old belief" (p. 85) on the part of the Church. In point of fact, the dictum "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*" basically only gave expression to the faith that the salvation of man is possible only in and through Jesus Christ. It meant, only secondarily, owing to a too restricted understanding of what 'Church' meant, that there is no possibility of salvation 'outside the Church'. This is obvious, for if the above-given dictum meant *per contra* that there is salvation 'within the Church', this salvation attainable in the Church does not come *from* the power of the Church *as a body* of human persons, but because of Jesus Christ's presence in the Church and his working of salvation in the Church. Even today the Church has not renounced (she can never renounce it!) her faith in Jesus Christ as the sole Cause and Source of salvation for entire humanity. Therefore, the present growing awareness in the Church, namely, that there is the possibility and the givenness of salvation outside the Church *because* Christ works salvation *even beyond* the visible boundaries of the Church (which in fact means that the Church has really no boundaries), of which the theological-spiritual meaning and consequences as regards the Church as well as the non-Christians are, in great measure, still to be discovered, does not amount to a mere disavowal of what she believed till recently. It is not simply a broadening of the concept of 'Church' for the practical purpose of accommodating oneself to the new, unavoidable situation. There has been in the Church a real growth in awareness regarding the reality of the 'Church'.

Finally, returning to the theoretical question of dialectics, we may ask whether the scheme of 'dialectics' is the real clue to the meaning of human life. The dialectical aspect is undoubtedly

17. Cf. K. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1976, pp. 213-225, 366 ff.; C. Molari, *La fede e il suo linguaggio*, Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 1972, pp. 167-176.

basic but does not this dialectics take place within a wider and more fundamental 'synthesis'? There is an ultimate unity in human life, from which the multiple dimensions of man's life originate, and to which they are ultimately reduced. From this centre of original and ultimate unity proceed, in man's movement to the goal of self-realization, intellect and will, knowledge and action, theory and praxis. In their diversification and dialectical opposition, intellect and will, together with their multiple functions, are sustained by the substantial ground (*anima*), whereat they remain always already united in an undifferentiated unity as the vital force of his being.¹⁸ The dialectics between theory and praxis in human life is unintelligible without its foundation in this primordial and ultimate synthesis in man.

iii. Verification in theology

In his criticism of the doctrines of the Church, A. betrays considerable influence of the Marxist 'philosophy of praxis' and of the principles of the contemporary language-philosophy. Thus the meaning and truth of the doctrines of faith are to be determined, according to him, on the basis of their practical relevance in man's search for meaning and value in the historical process of his self-development (cf. pp. 100-103).

According to the Marxist view, praxis is man's creative, productive activity with respect to the material world, by which he changes the world and through this world-transforming activity realises himself. Truth (theory) emerges in the historical process of human praxis. The Marxist concept of truth is not without ambiguity, but the material-sensible character and the orientation to the world (matter)-transforming activity of man, are decisive to it.¹⁹ Similarly, the contemporary language-philosophy considers, generally speaking, the empirical verifiability of the object of

18. Such a metaphysical vision of man is basic to the philosophy of St. Thomas. Cf. K. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1968, pp. 246-290.

19. Cf. G. M. Cottier, "Sur la theorie de la Praxis", *Nova et Vetera*, XLVIII: 4 (1973), 241-247, pp. 241-243; T. M. Jaroszewski, "The Definition of the Notion of 'Praxis' in Karl Marx's Philosophy", *Dialectics and Humanism* (The Polish Philosophical Quarterly), I: 1 (1973), 31-52.

knowledge as the criterion of meaning and truth of the statements about it. In the case of non-empirical objects of knowledge it demands at least an indirect empirical verifiability (understood as the practical relevance of the object of knowledge to man's life and self-realizing activity in the world) as the criterion of their truth. Expressed otherwise, this means that, whether, in what sense and to what extent the doctrines or statements about non-empirical (transcendent) realities (in our case: the doctrines of faith) are meaningful and true, must be determined by their practical relevance to man's life. It has been always maintained that the doctrines of faith have, in a real sense, meaning and relevance to man's life. Hence it must be premised that here the question of relevance is characterized by the philosophical influences it presupposes.

In the present discussion we have already come across the the question of the truth-value of theological statements. We have seen that a properly understood and practised appeal to the authority of the revealing God is a fundamental and indispensable principle of theological methodology and, consequently, that it is a criterion of truth: of the truths of faith and of theological statements. (Theological statements *in sensu stricto* are the truths of faith in their linguistic expression.) Hence a theological statement has its verification in so far as it is in harmony with the *tradition of revelation*, as this tradition is understood and lived in the Church.

However, this does not mean that theology has no other means of verification than this. It has, but the nature and the method of verification in theology should not be dictated from outside nor should the validity and value of it be judged according to the criteria of verification of other sciences. First of all, a strictly empirical verification, namely, that the conceptual content of the statements should correspond to sensible, repeatedly examinable facts, is not possible in theology (but we need not dispute about this, for, generally speaking, this claim has been already abandoned by the critics of religion, though the *effects* (which means, then, an *indirect* verification!) which the truths of faith bring about in a person who lets it penetrate his life, and is existentially committed to it and has thus an 'experience of

faith', are in some respects also sensibly perceivable. One cannot demand a strictly rational verification either, though the truths of faith have a certain intelligibility.

The verification which theology can offer, is of an *experiential* nature.²⁰ One has to consider the experience of the truths of faith which a believer has: it is an experience of salvation. Though a personal experience, it is not restricted to the realm of subjectivity, nor is it of mere subjective significance. Others have been able to *observe* in those who have lived this experience of faith, interior peace and joy, an overcoming of the existential anxiety and desperation, serenity of mind in suffering and in facing death (which in the saints even reaches the extent of real joy), selfless love and service of others, etc. Now this experience is, at the same time, an experience of *life* as such, in so far as in it the believing subject discovers and experiences the meaning and purpose of existence. Thus faith offers the believing person an adequate motivation for his concrete existence and actions. The truths of faith have their verification in this faith-experience of the believer, which is at the same time his life-experience.

Obviously, the verification of the truths of faith is not to be sought individually and in isolation (in relation to certain individually considered experiences), but in the interrelation of those truths, or, more precisely, within the *whole* of faith-experience. Furthermore, there is factually a difference in the intensity of faith-experience²¹. Verification must take account of this and must recognize, in the intense instances of faith-experience the moments of verification *par excellence*. However, this should not be considered as selectivity in a pejorative sense. In reality, we find a similar procedure in the natural sciences: certain scientific phenomena, which count for the verification of certain scientific statements, are clearly observable only in particular circumstances or phases. That it is not possible to observe and verify them in all circumstances, does not disqualify their verifiability as such or their truth. In like manner, theology has certain especially favourable *loci* of verification of its statements. For instance,

20. Cf. D. Mieth, art. cit., pp. 34-41.

21. Cf. Ibid., p. 38.

the salvific experience of the doctrines of faith in the lives of saints, in the lives of those who lead an intense spiritual life and, inspired and strengthened by this spiritual experience, lead a life of dedicated service to others, and in those who have undergone a radical 'conversion' in their lives, there are privileged *loci* of verification of theological statements.

The salvific experience, on the individual level, is already of relevance for the community and has somehow a community character, in so far as the individual makes this experience as a member of the community. Besides this, there is salvific experience also on the level of the community, which for theology is precisely the ecclesial community. This experience brings about in the life of the community effects identical with those of the individual. The ecclesial community being constituted of persons who are related to each other in an intercommunicative existence, the *communicability* of the truths of faith becomes explicitly recognizable in the community, although factually the communication in question does not occur primarily or exclusively through a linguistic mediation. The pre-linguistic 'co-existing and co-experiencing' of the community is in itself a more fundamental medium of communication. Thus the salvific experience of the community is a *locus* of verification of theological statements. They have their verification in so far as the salvific experience of faith is, on the part of the community, simultaneously a discovery and experience of the meaning and purpose of life. It offers an adequate motivation for individual and collective life and activity. Obviously, the motivation here does not concern the different sectors of the community's life and activity separately considered but its *life as a whole*. (Factors other than the salvific experience of faith can provide an adequate motivation for the different sectors of life considered separately in themselves.)

That which is experienced in individual as well as community experience, is not merely the meaning and purpose of human existence. There is simultaneously the experience of an 'Other' which theology designates 'God'. In fact, those who have the salvific experience of faith, have acknowledged it to be owing to God's presence and working in them. Non-theological sciences should not simply explain away the reality of this unique experience by psychological categories like hallucination, etc. God is not to be interpreted as a mere symbolic representation of what man himself is, and of that which he perceives as the meaning and values of life. Theological statements about the reality of God have also their indirect verification in the salvific experience of the truths of faith, inasmuch as the experience of believers of God does not occur over and above the experience of the truths

of faith but precisely in and through this experience. The Christian understanding of the truths of faith reduces their multiplicity to the one Truth of God²².

4. Conclusion

In the course of our analysis we have examined the basic features of the method proposed by A. and have tried to show the problems and dangers which it involves. It is not the aim of this article to express a simple disapproval of the method. What is alarming is rather the radical relativizing of the validity and relevance of Christianity as such as well as the symptomatic allusions to reduction or rejection of certain basic doctrines of the Christian faith. According to the proposed perspective, what we say of God is "more a figurative, poetic or 'mythical' expression of our experience or apprehension of the meaning of life and reality than a 'literally objective expression'" (p. 91). When the doctrines of faith cannot be accommodated within a scientific theology through such reduction, there is the tendency to call in question the truth of those doctrines: e. g. the truth of the dogma that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in an indivisible unity (cf. *ibid.*), or the truth of the resurrection of Christ (cf. p. 89).

The possibility of applying the proposed method without subverting consequences, is not to be excluded. But as long as the epistemological standpoint which it presupposes remains as it is, this is a difficult task. The very applicability of the method in theology is seriously questionable, because its application would lead to consequences, which considered from the viewpoint of ecclesial faith, are unacceptable in principle. As far as the matter can be understood, the application of that method in all its severity and radicality in all fields of theology indiscriminately, and in the same way, will unavoidably lead to such consequences. Such a radicalism will not be of help to theology in the fulfilment of its mission. No judgement is pronounced here on a particular view. It should not be misunderstood as such. What is required in theology, is rather an honest and open discussion of views, which will help us in the understanding of faith and in the fulfilment of the common task. It is with this intention and in this spirit that this discussion has been conducted.

Sudetenstrasse 20,
78 Freiburg i. Br.

Davis Kanjirathingal

22. Cf. K. Rahner, "Über den Begriff des Geheimnisses in der katholischen Theologie", *Schriften zur Theologie*, Vol. IV, Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1960, 51-99, pp. 81-82.

Contributors

FR. GEORGE PUTHUMANA is doing research in patristic theology at the Institut Catholique, Paris. He studied philosophy, theology and patristics at the Pontifical Athenaeum, Poona, and the Gregorian University, Rome, and previously taught theology at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam.

FRS. JOHN ARAKKAL, research assistant, University of Saarland, Saarbrücken, West Germany, M. V. Cyriac and Abraham Koothottil, both research students, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, Belgium, are from Kerala, India, and belong to the Syrian Catholic community. The article is part of a study which, when complete, they hope to publish as a book.

FR. DAVIS KANJIRATHINGAL holds an M. A. Philosophy from the Pontifical Urban University, Rome and M. A. in Theology from the Catholic University of Louvain. He is now preparing for Doctorate in Theology at Albert-Ludwigs University, Freiburg i. Br., West Germany.

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